

両親の借金を肩代わりしてもらう条件は日本一

可愛い女子高生と一緒に暮らすことでした。

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I'm gonna live with you not because my parents left me their debt but because I like you

# Chapter 1 You never know what might happen in life

“Hey, Yuya. Where’s your dad now?”

I, Yoshizumi Yuya, sitting in the living room of my house was facing a group of scary-looking men dressed in black suits and wearing sunglasses with scars on their cheeks. For outsiders, they seemed like a bunch of dangerous people.

“I don’t know,” I said. “I got home just now and found this on the table...” “

I handed a note from the table to the person who seemed like the boss of this scary group. After he took off his sunglasses and finished reading the note, his shoulders started to tremble.

Oh, he definitely seems to be angry now.

“That b\*\*\*\*\*d ... he finally got away...! And he even left his son alone! What a b\*\*\*\*\*d! “

‘You never know what might happen in life.’ That was what my father used to say.

He used to jump on the latest fashion hoping to make a fortune, but was always one step behind. So, by the time he started, the expensive items were already out of fashion and at the end he was left with nothing but unsold merchandise along with a lot of debt.

What was the last thing he tried? I think it was Tapioca, but I honestly don’t

want to remember.

For such a failure as a merchant, my mother really loved that helpless man who did not possess any business talent.

My mother had a baby face that seemed like it would never age. Even when we walked together, we were mistaken as brother and sister multiple times. She was pretty and also a good cook, so as her son, I felt proud of my mother. That was why I once asked her why she married such a useless person. At that time, she answered shyly:

“Well, don’t you think it’s nice to see someone who is stupid, but also is working hard in his own stupid way? Your mother loves such a man.”

Love turns one blind, that was how the saying went. Whenever I saw people who were working hard, I had nothing but respect for them. But in my father’s case, he really tested my limits. I wanted to preach to him that people should learn from their mistakes.

But the only person I really needed to preach, was to myself.

I didn’t say anything to my father, who started a new business and failed, piling up debts, and also to my mother, who supported him and pushed him on. The result was the mess I was in right now.

“Taka-san. How much money did my father borrow this time?”

“Oh? No, I don’t blame you for not knowing. That’s right... Well, it’s about 30 million (30.000.000 yen = 250.000€ = 300.000\$). Your father kept on borrowing money, promising to pay it back, and thus the debt has grown over time.”

While saying that, Taka-san and his other brothers sipped their tea. Oh, I forgot to mention it, but I’m not scared of these people. I’ve known Takashi Omichi, aka Taka-san since I was in primary school. He was a strong man and had a tough job, but he has been good to me. He’s like an older brother to me.

“Damn it. Kotaro, you b\*\*\*\*\*d. You finally left Yuya behind and ran away abroad. And what’s more, you’ve left the rest to the lawyers? How far did you think you could have gone with that, you b\*\*\*\*\*d!?”

When I came home, I didn’t find my mother there and the lights were turned off, as they normally should be. When I entered the room wondering why, there was a letter on the table, which said:

—Yuya! I know it’s sudden, but your mother and father have decided to move abroad! Apparently, Japan seems to be too small for us! For the time being, we’re going to hit the jackpot in the Vegas casinos, so please look forward to it! Don’t worry, I’ve got a lawyer friend of mine who will take care of the rest! Bye! —.

To be honest, I doubted my dad’s words, but he must have been serious because my mother’s and father’s belongings were missing from the house. What was I supposed to do now all alone? When I was at a loss for what to do, Taka and his friends arrived, creating this situation.

“Even though you were born from such a couple, Yuya, you grew up fine. Isn’t this a miracle? No, but perhaps thanks to me?”

“Haha ... Well, I at least learned that my parents were the worst people around me. But what do you plan to do now, Taka-san?”

“That’s right. As expected, your father didn’t pay back the debt, and I can’t help you with this situation anymore. I have to take you with me.”

Taka said this with a sullen look on his face. All of his brothers turned their heads away too.

...I see now, I have to shoulder the debt now instead of my useless father and that too probably not in the right way. Does my life end here now?

“Rest assured, Yuya. I’ve persuaded your father to let you stay with me. I’ll do everything in my power to make sure you live properly, don’t worry.”

“That’s right, Yuya! The best thing for you is to stay as you are, a normal

high school student!”

“You can’t be like us, Yuya!”

Taka-san bit his lip and said this with a determined look on his face. The rest of his brothers followed suit, clenching their fists and cheering me on. Their faces didn’t scare me. Well, they possessed scary faces, but they were really nice people. Maybe that was also why my dad got so carried away with them.

“OK. I’m sorry for making this sudden, but you will be coming with me, Yuya. I’ll honor you with my perfect dogeza.” (Dogeza: Greatest apology posture in Japan)

I appreciate the gesture, but the line to go with it sounded incredibly lame, Taka-san! With a bitter smile on my face, I got up and headed towards the kitchen to wash the dishes and cups that everyone had drunk from.

Ding dong —.

The bell rang, announcing a visitor. Who could it be? It was too early for newspaper collection. Was it a religious solicitor? No, I’ve fought them off many times. I’m already paying for the national broadcasting service, so who could it be?

Ding dong —, Ding dong —.

After two or three times, the interval between the chimes gradually shortened. Eventually, after every chime, the chorus of the next chime rang too. It was so loud that Taka and I had to cover our ears. I had no choice but to respond.

“Yes, yes! I’m coming! Who is this!?”

I opened the front door, being a little frustrated from the ping-pong barrage. Standing there was...

“Hello, Yoshizumi-kun. I came to help you.”

The girl in front of me had long, straight, clear black hair that reminded me of the night sky. Her eyes were like pearls, as round as a kitten’s. It was not

wrong to compare her to the models often seen in the magazines, as she looked like a goddess right out of a famous painting.



“Hitotsuba Kaede?”

Hitotsuba Kaede, the princess of our school, who had won the Grand Prix at the National High School Girls’ Miss Contest and had been voted as the prettiest high school girl in Japan, stood there smiling.



## Chapter 2 The cutest schoolgirl in Japan has a poisonous tongue

Hitotsuba Kaede. I don't think there exists any student at my Meiwadai High School, who doesn't know her name. If they don't, then they would be quite out-of-touch with their surroundings.

She is, after all, the prettiest high school girl in the country of Japan, having won the Grand Prix at the National High School Girls' Miss Contest held in December last year.

Even at the beginning, Hitotsuba-san was the most beautiful girl in the school, with mature appearance and proportions that were far beyond any high school student, along with her occasional smile described as the smile of a goddess, captivating both men and women. I was also one of those who admired her.

“What's wrong, Yoshizumi-kun? Your face is red. Could it perhaps be a cold!? That's terrible! You need to go to hospital immediately —!”

“No, it's okay! I don't have a fever! I'm perfectly fine!”

“Is that so ...? But just in case, I'll check it.”

‘Gyah!’ I rudely let out a scream, but that was unavoidable.

That was because Hitotsuba-san took off her gloves she was wearing and put her beautiful hand, which was as clean as fresh snow, on my forehead. My body temperature skyrocketed as I felt a cool but definite warmth radiating from her palm. I could feel myself burning, not just my cheeks, but my entire

body.

She didn't care about my nervousness. After a short moment, she nodded her head. It was a cute gesture on its own, but with her cheeks puffed up like a blowfish, its destructive power was doubled.

“Hmm ... your forehead is a little hot after all? It's better for you to go to the hospital ...”

“No, it's okay! It's just your imagination! Look, I'm sure it's because I was in a heated room until now! Rather than that, why did you come to my home? What did you mean with help?”

“Oh! That's right. Yoshizumi-kun, may I enter your room?”

I wanted to politely decline. There were a number of men already in the room including Taka-san, who were all currently dressed in suits emanating a dominant and pressuring aura. I know he looked scary on the outside, but inside he was a kind man. However, if I were to meet him for the first time, I would have suffered from a stroke. This was why I wanted to stop her from entering with all my might, but...

“Hey, Yuya. You got a visitor? I'm sorry, but please come back later. We are about to leave.”

What a bad timing. Why did you come to the entrance at this unique time, Taka-san! I was just going to ask her to leave because I didn't want Hitotsuba-san to see you!

But Hitotsuba-san, even facing Taka-san's scary appearance, did not hesitate to smile like a goddess in front of him.

“Just at the right moment. I wanted to talk to you, Omichi Takashi. No, would it be better to call you Omichi-san, the young leader of the Haratsu clan?”

She immediately dropped a bombshell on us. How did she come to know about the clan that Taka-san was affiliated with and even his position in it!?

She was not supposed to be a part of such a bloody world! Even Taka-san, who had been kind, now had a glint of killing intent in his eyes. He glared at her with such an intent which had never even been directed at me.

“Ta, Taka-san! Calm down! Don’t make such a scary face! When you worked at a yakisoba stall at a festival once, did you forget that a kid saw your scary-looking face and ran away crying!? You said you were going to be a nice guy after that!”

“Sorry, Yuya. That was a different story than this one here. ... Hey, young lady. You seem to be wearing the same uniform as Yuya... tell me, who are you?”

My older brother Taka-san, who was so kind to me just a moment ago, had disappeared, and standing there was Omichi-san, the young leader of the gang. He questioned Hitotsuba-san with the same pressure he used to exert on my father when he was snapping back at him. But she didn’t shrink away at all and replied:

“My name is Hitotsuba Kaede. Oh, you don’t need to remember the name. In fact, I don’t think you can even remember that, so please forget it immediately.”

“Oh? Do you take me for a fool?”

“Well, what should I say about you then? ... You look like a person with only a single brain cell, who thinks that if you were to look at people like that, they would be scared. Oh, I didn’t mean to be rude. But, comparing you to a single-celled organism was actually truly disrespectful to all the single-celled organisms that exist in this world. I’m sorry about that. Also, that tie of yours looks really tacky.”

Why are you laughing and stirring things up, Hitotsuba-san!

Taka-san has actually been a very good worker, so good that he even became the number two in his group at a young age!

But, please don’t ask me what kind of work he does. I don’t want to know

that either.

“... Hahaha. For how you look, you have quite the sharp tongue! So, you aren't an acquaintance of Yuya then? I could punish you in many ways, you know? But, I will tolerate your words for once!”

Oh no, despite his words, Taka-san was already in tears and looked really gloomy. I'm afraid he was not as strong as he portrayed himself to be.

But in his defense, it was not unreasonable. When a beautiful girl you've just met calls you a bird brain, and then finally shames you for wearing a hideous purple tie that you thought would look good on you and would suit your taste in fashion, you would want to cry, wouldn't you? Yeah, I would cry too.

“...Hey, Yuya. You think I'm an idiot too, don't you? I can see it on your face.”

Did it really show? No no, I wasn't making fun of you, Taka-san. In fact, I have a lot of respect for you.

“Huh... Hitotsuba Kaede was your name, then? You've been stirring things up quite a lot, but you still haven't answered my question yet. I'll ask you again. Who the h\*\*l are you?”

“...Hitotsuba Yoichiro. That name should sound familiar to you, right?”

Well, that name didn't ring a bell for me. I had a hunch that it was Hitotsuba-san's father or someone else related to her, but Taka-san seemed to know what kind of person it was. His face, which had been bright red with anger and frustration, was startled, gradually turning blue.

“The Director of the Criminal Investigation Bureau of the National Police Agency ...! Your father?”

“No, Yoichiro-san is my uncle. But like my father, he loves me very much. I'm sure he'd be willing to abuse his authority a bit if I asked him to.”

“Wait! What do you want from us?”

“It’s simple. Just withdraw from Yoshizumi-kun. Of course, I’m not saying it’s free. The amount that Yoshizumi-kun’s parents borrowed from you, the entire 36,067,977 yen (Footnote: About 300,000€/ 350,000\$.) including interest; they will all be transferred to you later. So don’t ever get involved with Yoshizumi-kun again.”

Hey, hey, hey. I was listening quietly, but the story was getting more and more serious! Could it be possible that Hitotsuba-san’s uncle is a very important person in the National Police Agency, and Hitotsuba-san wanted to take over the huge debt that my father arranged? And that was a good amount of money! How could this debt just be handled like that?

I was so confused that I could not think of anything else. Just think about it. Just when I was in despair because my parents had fled overseas and I would have to start working for a gang at the age of 16 in order to pay back the debt, a classmate of mine who had been voted the prettiest high school girl in Japan arrives, and with a cool face, she went on a rampage against the young head, and to top it off, she offered to pay off the debt in full for me (Footnote: That sentence is very long and unordered because he is completely perplexed by this situation.)! Wouldn’t you also be panicking?

But it was not over yet. That was because someone else appeared.

“Hey, Kaede. I told you not to go ahead of me...!”

Without the doorbell even ringing, I opened the door again and was greeted by a beautiful lady who looked like an adult version of Hitotsuba. She must have been in a hurry, because even though it was the middle of winter, her forehead was covered with sweat.

“Excuse me. My name is Hitotsuba Sakurako. I’m the mother of Hitotsuba Kaede here, and a lawyer.”

...The person I thought was her sister turned out to be Hitotsuba-san’s mother.

## Chapter 3 Like mother like daughter

Hitotsuba Sakurako, Hitotsuba-san's mother, was a tall, slender woman, slightly taller than Hitotsuba-san. Her reddish-brown hair was trimmed till the shoulders. She had a beautiful face with well-defined eyebrows, which gave her the look of a war goddess who brought victory for her allies rather than a goddess of beauty.

“Omichi-san, the young leader of the Harazu clan. It seems that you have been conducting some very shady business.”

Her expression was calm. But the tone of her voice sounded as sharp as a sword as if no one could escape the invisible blade pointed at their throat. Even I, who was not directly involved in the incident, could feel the pressure, so Taka-san, who was directly facing her, might be feeling terrified.

“W, what's that supposed to mean? We just want the money we lent. But it was his father who fled overseas without paying back what he borrowed from us. So even though we're not responsible, we were left with no choice but to demand him for payment, right? Isn't that the way it should be?!”

Oh, did he surprisingly retain his composure? No, that couldn't be true for Taka-san. Look closely! Your forehead was drenched with cold sweat, and the corners of your mouth were trembling slightly, Taka-san! That definitely displayed that he was just trying to act tough.

That was just like the time when Taka-san was running a yakisoba stall at a fair, and he thought he was smiling as he handed out the goods, but he looked

like a Hannya (Footnote: A Japanese demon) to the kids! They got scared and cried, and he felt so sad afterwards, that he had to hold back his tears!

“There is no such logic. In fact, the money lending business that you are doing is out of bounds in every way. You don’t need to talk about interest rates or anything like that, do you? You are aware that you’re breaking the law, right?”

“Ha! How can I lend money if I’m afraid of that! So, what are you going to do with us, lawyer? Or, are you going to tell the higher-ups in the police department? Yeah? What are you gonna do?”

Oh. Taka-san has made his final stand. While I’m sure his heart was racing, and he was drenched in a cold sweat, that was an impressive feat for him. In my heart, I shed a tear for Taka-san and applauded him.

But to Hitotsuba-san’s mother, Taka-san was no more than a small fish at the beginning of a game. He was like a tutorial enemy that she would never lose to.

“‘My dad is the coolest guy in Japan.’, huh. That’s what your daughter said. She’s cute, isn’t she?”

Not even hesitating, she instantly delivered a lethal blow to her enemy!

Realizing what she just said, Taka-san’s face displayed signs of shock. I tried my best to hold back my laughter.

“‘My dad works hard every day for my mom and me. He leaves the house early in the morning and comes home late at night. But he gives us a good-bye kiss and a good-night kiss on our cheeks. With my mom, it’s directly on the lips.’ Oh my, isn’t that a little too much stimulation for your first grader daughter?”

” You...! Where the h\*\*l did you get that...!”

“If I were to deep kiss in front of my child... how would my child’s future look like...”

– As if on top of her mother’s blow, Hitotsuba-san unleashed her own heartfelt blow. This mother and daughter duo were indeed scary.

Taka-san retreated away from them; his mouth turned agape like a fish seeking oxygen.

That’s right, Taka-san loved his daughter, Rika-chan. He was also really in love with his wife. Well, how do I know this? That was because I’ve been to Taka-san’s house a few times. No, Rika was really cute. She would be popular in the future, I’m sure of that.

“But Omichi-san. To your wife, let alone your doting daughter, you’ve only described your job as a simple salaryman. What would happen if they were to know the truth?”

“Oh, that’s... that’s... no! My wife and child have nothing to do with it!”

“Yes, and I think the same. The debt left by Yoshizumi Yuya’s parents should be paid by his parents. Yoshizumi Yuya himself is not responsible for that.”

I didn’t know much about the law. I thought that if my parents caused trouble for Taka-san and the others, then I, as their son, should be the one to clean up their mess. Besides, Taka-san has been very kind to me. He was like a big brother to me.

“But that wouldn’t convince you or your boss, so let’s make a deal.”

With that said, Hitotsuba-san’s mother took out an envelope from the bag she was holding. Taka-san received it and checked its contents with a wary look. After a short glance, an expression of surprise could be seen on his face.

“Are you... insane? I mean, you’re not just any lawyer, are you?”

“No, I’m really just a lawyer, okay? It’s just that my employer’s very rich.”

The smile Hitotsuba-san’s mother showed was very beautiful, but the radiance and the beauty felt like a rose with its thorns. That kind of rose could turn out to be fatal for a person when carelessly touched. It was the first



time I had ever seen such a bewitching smile, and after scratching his head a few times, Taka-san raised his hands in surrender.

“All right. If that’s fine with you, then this deal is sealed. I’ll never touch Yuya again. I promise.”

What? Taka-san, what do you mean? The entire 3,607,977-yen debt (Footnote: About 300,000€/ 350,000\$.) would just be paid off with the contents of that envelope? Just like that? That scares me.

# Chapter 4 The debt completely paid off, but

The debt left behind by my useless father was quite large. So just what was inside Hitotsuba Sakurako's envelope that erased the entire debt? I was quite curious, but Taka-san quickly put it away inside his suit pocket without showing. Could it be that? Was it like those checks you saw in old dramas?

“Have you confirmed that the content fully compensates the amount, that son of a b\*tch Yoshizumi Kotaro owed you?”

Wow, she just called my father a son of a b\*tch in front of me. I'm sure he was a b\*\*\*\*\*d without excuse, but Hitotsuba-san's mother didn't hesitate to mince her words at all. Did she know him by any chance?

“Yes. I've definitely recovered the amount I lent to that idiot. That's why, I'm really happy for you, Yuya. You can live an honest life from now on. Don't end up like that a\*\*hole, okay?”

“Of course, I won't become like my dad. But Taka-san, what's going on? I can't keep up with the story at all!”

While I was feeling agitated, the daughter of the duo gently squeezed my hand. I was surprised at her action, and when I looked at her face, I saw her smiling gently. While it made me calm down, my heart started to beat faster in return. How could I not be nervous when a goddess I admired held my hand and smiled at me?

But didn't Hitotsuba-san's hand feel colder than when she had touched my

forehead earlier? Furthermore, was it my imagination that she was trembling and sweating a little?

“Yoshizumi-kun. I’ll tell you about it when the deal is done, so don’t worry. It’s okay. There is not a single demerit for you.”

If you’re talking about demerits, then there has to be at least a merit, right? But the advantage from this deal was only based on the perception of Hitotsuba-san’s standards, and it could turn out to be bad for me, right? In other words, there was no way I wouldn’t suspect the other side if I were suddenly being told that I actually won the first prize at the year-end lottery. In fact, I wouldn’t even have bought such a lottery ticket in the first place.

“Huh, let’s leave it to the youngsters from here on out. That’s right, Omichi-san. If you don’t mind, would you like to have some tea? Would you also like to talk with other members of the Yoshizumi Kotaro Victims’ Association? Of course, my subordinates waiting in the back would be happy to join us, too.”

“I refuse. It’s obvious that if I get involved with you guys any further, I’m only going to end up in trouble. We’re going home. Hey, you guys! We’re moving out!”

Taka-san shouted, calling everyone who was waiting in the living room. Even with their sunglasses, I could sense their perplexion, but Taka-san didn’t bother to explain anything as he left the house with them. Just before he left, he turned his back to me and told me without turning around:

“Yuya... this is the end of my relationship with you. I won’t see you ever again. That’s why I wish you well for your future. Farewell!”

With these words, Taka-san disappeared into the dimly lit city while waving his hand. He was trying to sound cool, but I already knew where he lived. If anything, his wife had even asked me to come over and eat her food. We could just meet anytime.

“Well. That’s it for me too. I’ll leave the rest to you, Kaede.”

“Yes. Thanks, mom.”

“It’s okay. It’s nothing worth mentioning, Kaede. More importantly, Yoshizumi Yuya. I’m sorry for scaring you. That b\*\*\*\*\*d, no, your father asked me to get rid of all his debts for you, so please don’t worry about your future. It won’t be the same as before, but you will still be able to live a normal high school life.”

I was curious about the words “it won’t be the same as before”, but before I could ask her about it, Hitotsuba-san’s mother had already left the house. Also, my hand was still in Hitotsuba-san’s grip, but wasn’t her hand trembling like crazy? Her legs were also shaking like a newborn fawn!

“What’s wrong, Hitotsuba-san? You’re shaking so much! You don’t seem to be fine!”

“What are you talking about, Yoshizumi-kun? I’m not shaking... not at all. It’s not like I didn’t want you to see that I was almost trembling when I stood in front of that very scary uncle and also wasn’t the reason I agitated him more than I should have. It’s not like the fear I felt at that scary moment rushed back to me when I was alone with you, and I never felt like I was going to collapse!”

She was talking rapidly with such a conceited expression, but her eyes darted around. Her body was shaking as if she was experiencing an earthquake.

Yeah, it was clear that she was not fine. Nevertheless, I could understand her emotions. In the past, I used to be scared of Taka-san too.

I sighed and wrapped my hands around hers.

“Hitotsuba-san. I’m going to serve you some tea, so why don’t you go to the living room and rest for a while? You will tell me the whole story, right?”

“Yes, yes... of course. I’ll explain everything to you. With the deal done, the debt your parents left you has been paid off, but with one condition.”

Huh, that didn’t sound so awfu-

“The condition was... that you have to live with me.”

... wait, what? Living together? Me and Hitotsuba-san? You're kidding, right!? If that's the case, I'll be murdered by not only all the boys in school, but by her fans from all over the country!

“Don't worry. I'll explain it to you more in detail. So, let's go to the living room quickly, okay? Yuya-kun.”

Hitotsuba-san called out my name with a goddess-like smile. Her smile was so lovely that I couldn't help myself from admiring it and would have rated it a 99 out of 100. Sadly, her legs that were still trembling in fear somewhat ruined its charm, which otherwise would have earned full marks.

# Chapter 5 Hitotsuba-sanüfs selfishness

I took Hitotsuba-san's trembling hand and invited her into the living room, making her sit on a chair. After receiving tea and taking a break, she calmed herself down, as I waited for her to talk.

"Now, Yuya-kun. Let me explain the situation you are in right now. To be honest, this situation can just be summarized in a few words: Yuya-kun, you have become my property now. That's all."

"Yeah. I get it. You're not gonna explain, are you? Is that right?"

"I thought there was no point in rambling on, so I just kept it short and simple. Was that wrong?"

"Of course not! When did I become your property? It's not like you just bought a pet! Please explain it to me in a way so that I can understand!"

"Pet. That's right, Yuya-kun is now my pet from today. Yeah, that's good. That sounds wonderful."

She wasn't willing to explain the situation and did not want to listen to me at all! With her arms crossed and her cheeks blushing, she was lost in her own imagination. Despite her attitude, it was a crime to be so beautiful because even that undignified posture could be turned into a painting.

I made deliberate noises to arouse her attention as I sipped my tea.

"No, Pochi. You shouldn't drink like that... I'm sorry, Yuya-kun. I've been

imagining things a little too much. Where have I left off?”

“... I think we were up to the point where I became ‘Hitotsuba-san’s property.’”

“Ah, right. I was just about to talk about why Yuya-kun became my property. This is because your father cried out to my mother for help.”

Why did my father ask for Hitotsuba-san’s mother specifically? Hitotsuba-san clarified it to me. To summarize, my father, the b\*\*\*\*\*d in our family, and Hitotsuba-san’s mother, the goddess-of-war, attended the same elementary, junior, and high school. She had heard about my father’s failures during her work, and about a month ago, she suddenly got a call from him. The message that could be termed in a nutshell: “Please help me.”

“At first, Mom was going to refuse. She said that while it didn’t matter how rotten the relationship between them was, it was still his own fault with his foolish actions. She also added that Yuya-kun’s mother was just as guilty because she kept cheering for him without stopping his disastrous mistakes.”

That b\*\*\*\*\*d father of mine was really out of his mind. I can’t believe he would send a sudden SOS to his childhood friend who now had a family to take care of. When he comes back from overseas, I’m going to beat him until I feel satisfied.

“However, Yuya’s father cried and said, ‘Please save my son. There’s nothing wrong with Yuya, and unlike me, he has potential. I don’t want to destroy his future.’ “

“....”

“Well, even so, my mother had no reason to nod her head. For her, it was adding fuel to the existing fire.”

... I suppose that would be true. From Hitotsuba-san’s mother’s point of view, I was just a stranger. For her, it was a short-sighted excuse to use one’s own son as an excuse for help. Such a reason was just as shallow as a small puddle of water. You foolish father, you could have used your head a little

more.

“So, I’m sure the intelligent Yuya-kun is wondering why my mother still decided to help him. Of course, the reason was that I was selfish!”

Hitotsuba-san puffed out her chest and made a smug face. Even if hidden behind her knit sweater, you could see her twin mounds swaying with sheer momentum. And the way she bent over made them more pronounced, making it difficult to not look at them. I had to look away for a moment.

“Errr, how is this selfish of you, Hitotsuba-san? How does that lead to helping my father? Your mother wouldn’t take on someone else’s debt just because you were selfish, would she?”

“I’ve never been selfish in my life, and I’ve always been a good, obedient child. My parents and grandparents were overjoyed to hear that their only daughter had been so selfish for the first time in her life. They almost wanted to cook red rice for this occasion. (Footnote: Red rice is traditionally cooked for happy occasions.)”

Did she just praise herself as a good and selfless girl? But even that wasn’t the biggest point which bothered me.

Did she just say her mother was crying of happiness over her selfishness? I can’t picture a dignified person like that goddess of war crying out of joy.

“There were two things I was selfish about. The first was that I wanted my mother to help you, Yuya-kun. It was only natural since you haven’t done anything wrong. I don’t really care what happened to your parents, but I couldn’t overlook the fact that you were going to suffer from that.”

I wasn’t sure why Hitotsuba-san cared about me. But while I couldn’t figure out the reason, it was always nice to know that someone cared about you.

“And the second reason stemmed from my selfishness. In all my age I have never made a decision based solely on my selfishness except for this one where I wanted you to become my property. After all, I said I wanted to live with you.”



“Okay, this part right here is impossible to understand! That’s not even selfishness anymore! You just skipped the confession part, the marriage proposal part, and all the other parts and just told your parents that you wanted to live together with me! Why would you do that!?”

“Because... I want to be with you, Yuya-kun...”

Yes, that was foul play! If the dignified Hitotsuba Kaede, who was like the manifestation of a goddess, was fidgeting with her fingers and curling her mouth in an embarrassed manner, any man would fall in love with her immediately! The destructiveness of this cuteness could even end a war!

“Then... everyone got excited about my selfish decision and my first love. My father prepared the check, my mother contacted Yuya-kun’s father, and... everything was decided like that.”

While wondering if I should mention her words “my first love”, Hitotsuba-san handed me a piece of paper. It was a kind of pledge, with my father’s name and seal signed at the bottom. The contents were...

“... ’One. I give Hitotsuba Kaede permission to live with Yoshizumi Yuya. Two, when Yuya turns eighteen, he agrees to register his name and become a son-in-law of the Hitotsuba family. Finally, after the start of cohabitation, any contact from Yoshizumi Yuya’s parents towards him will be prohibited forever.’ What... WHAT THE HECK IS THIS!!??”

Of course I would be screaming after reading such a pledge!

## Chapter 6 The Family with a loose screw in their head

It turned out that I was not only moving in with Hitotsuba-san, but also getting married next year! Becoming the son-in-law of her family! There would be no way my parents were to approve of that! Oh right, they already approved it with the pledge after it was signed by them!

...I could picture my sh\*tty dad signing it with a smile on his face, and my mom smiling uselessly and saying carefree things like: “Now Yu-kun will be happy.”

“Don’t worry. As for me, I’m going to support Yuya-kun, but I believe you already have a great will that won’t let me down. After you become my husband, you will work alongside my father and eventually become the chairman of the Ichiyo Group. This has been decided.”

What was going on with this father and daughter? My house was insignificant, but Hitotsuba-san’s family was the Hitotsuba Group! They allowed me, a mere high school student who they had never met, to marry their only precious daughter, and now they’ve decided to make me the next chairman!

“Your parents and my parents, they both blessed us with their permission. And Yuya-kun. Unfortunately, you do not have the right to refuse. If you refuse... you know what will happen, don’t you?”

“Ah. I get what you mean. I’m sure I’ll be made to work as a labour slave of the Hitotsuba Group. Or I’ll be forced to work underground like in the manga

world. H\*\*l awaits me, where I can't see the sun until I die."

"Hmmm... As expected of you, Yuya-kun. You have a good sense of humor. If you refuse, you will stay by my side for the rest of your life as my personal butler. Since you would be a butler, I won't kiss you, let alone do anything n\*\*\*\*y. You will experience a h\*\*l where you will not be able to touch me even if I were to expose my defenseless body."

That too sounded like h\*\*l, but a different kind of h\*\*l. I never thought I'd hear the day when I'd hear Hitotsuba-san talk about kissing and such indecent actions, but the fact that her face was bright red suggested that she was pushing herself too hard. But, falling into forbidden love while serving the lady as a butler, huh? That didn't sound bad.

But just when I was thinking that, Hitotsuba-san immediately retracted her words.

"Oh, no no! I don't like forbidden love! It's not a bad thing, but ... after all ... I still prefer ..... pure love... I want to be with you in public..."

What's with this girl, she's so cute. At school, Hitotsuba-san always looked dignified, virtuous and cool, but now, she seemed pretty and pure. She looked like a girl who would love shoujo manga (Footnote: Manga aimed at teenage girls, mostly with a focus on romantic relationships or emotions.). Her appearance and behavior didn't match, which created a huge gap-moe (Footnote: Cuteness created by a mismatch with appearance and behavior, or an unexpected change in behavior). And men were simple creatures that were vulnerable to that.

"Okay, okay. I'll take that offer. It's not something I'd go out of my way to refuse, and it's a miraculous offer for me. It would be a miracle for me to live with someone like Hitotsuba-san and get married to you. Isn't that a dream coming true? Isn't it great?"

I tried my best to act cheerfully. I quickly gulped down the entire tea from my teacup moisturizing my dried-out throat. It brought a sense of calmness to my rapidly beating heart.

Oh no, what did I just say? I've let my momentum get the better of me, and I've thoughtlessly agreed to be her husband after living together with her.

But... this is fine. I can live together with an extremely beautiful woman like Hitotsuba-san, get married, and eventually become chairman. So, this was fine. I wouldn't be lonely at all.

"Yuya-kun! What's wrong with you? Are you hurt anywhere?"

"..... Eh? What's wrong, Hitotsuba-san? I don't feel any pain anywhere..."

"Then Yuya-kun, why are you crying...?"

I touched my cheek. My fingers felt wet and cold. Strange, why am I crying? Now that I've been freed from my stupid parents, why does it hurt so much that my chest feels like it's going to tear apart? Why...

"It's okay. It's okay, Yuya-kun. I'll be by your side. I'll always be by your side."

Before I knew it, I was being hugged by Hitotsuba-san. She gently rubbed my back as if she were caring for a small child and called out to me. The sound of her voice was full of compassion. I couldn't help but put my arms around her waist and hug her back.

"It must have been hard for you. Let's be happy from now on, Yuya-kun."

The goddess's embrace felt so relaxing. I wished to stay like this forever.

"When you are settled, please pack your things. We'll tear this house down."

I was in such a relaxed mood until her words brought me back to reality. Wait, this house is going to disappear? Do you really mean it?

"We will clear the land and rebuild the house to rent it out. The rental income will also go into our pockets. But our love nest will be fine. I've already prepared it. Fortunately, tomorrow is Saturday and school are not in session, so let's go shopping!"

I sniffled and nodded. Hitotsuba-san smiled and patted my head. I just don't know what the h\*\*l is going on anymore.

It seems that my father's blood really ran through my body, and I may have made an impulsively important decision that would affect my life.

# Chapter 7 Her First Love

Hitotsuba Electronics. A global Japanese electronics manufacturing enterprise celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. The company's business was not limited to home appliances, but also included renovation, electric vehicles, and infrastructure development.

“My father, Kazuhiro Hitotsuba, is currently the fourth generation president. The current system based on family inheritance might be a bit old-fashioned nowadays, that's why my father plans not to follow such a tradition anymore. This means you must be very well prepared if you are going to follow in my father's footsteps, right?”

A death sentence. This was an unmistakable death sentence for me. I could understand that you had to devote yourself to your work every day once you have entered the workforce. However, I never thought that as a freshman in high school, I would be told that I had to already work hard to become the president of a company with tens of thousands of employees.

“You will be asked to enter a university in the future. Yes, at the very least, it has to be a national and public university. But it doesn't really matter if it's private as long as you don't go to a strange place.”

“But if I go to university, I won't be able to work for your father, will I?”

“You want to work? Do you mean that you are going to waste your time with part-time jobs and clubs? Or do you want to join a drinking club or a hook-up club to have fun? No, could it be that you want to be taken care of and nurtured by the kind senpais at your part-time job despite having me in your life?”

Just what are you imagining? I just asked if I should work for my father-in-law while attending university, because I thought I was going to be by the boss's side as soon as I graduated from high school. He said that I would be working for him after I became his son-in-law. During such a time, I would be attending university.

“Yuya-kun, all you have to do is to flirt with me. Despite my appearance, I am a very hard-working person. I'm sure I can meet your expectations and wishes, no matter how unique Yuya-kun fetishes are. So don't do it with other girls, okay?”

“Uh-huh. Of course.”

If someone as cute as her looked up and winked at you, you would have no choice but to agree! How else could I have answered?

Still, there was still a question left unanswered. I wasn't sure if it was a good idea to ask this now, after hugging her and crying, but there was something I had to know.

“Hey, Hitotsuba-san. Why did you try to help me? I don't think we had that much in common, did we?”

“That's right. It's true that Yuya-kun and I didn't talk much at school, but I kept an eye on you. Specifically, at the football team practice after school.”

There were few things I've continued to do since I was a child. One of them was soccer. However, the football team of Meiwadai High School was not that strong. My position was forward, but I never seemed to have received the ball. The reason was that our soccer team was especially weak in the midfield.

“Whenever the sun was setting and everyone else had already gone home, only one of the footballers kept kicking the ball by himself. Every day, from day to day. He never got tired of it. He was always kicking the ball towards the goal, and he had an attitude that I didn't usually see in people.”

“...”

“This guy was different from me. I thought that he was capable of working hard with all his effort. I couldn’t do such a thing. And then, strangely enough, before I knew it, I had my eye on that boy. I was rooting for him. I hoped that his effort would be rewarded one day.”

But the effort never paid off. I had dreamed of participating in the national tournament, but the result was that our team was defeated in the third round of the regional tournament. All my daily practice never bore fruit.

“But the boy was not despairing of his defeat. The next day he was kicking the ball by himself again, as usual. I thought he would rest a bit or stop practicing by himself.

Yes, you are a wonderful person with a strong heart that never gave in to despair. My heart has been riveted to your charm.”

“I’m not such an... amazing person, you know?”

“It doesn’t matter what you say. I have fallen in love with your dedication! Before anyone else would notice your charm, I wanted to make sure that you only look at me!”

I was very happy that Hitotsuba-san, who was voted as the cutest high school girl in Japan, thought so highly of me. I never thought that she would fall in love with me for kicking a ball around like an idiot every day. But since she liked me from a distance, that meant I didn’t really know anything about her. So if you were to ask me if I liked her, my answer would just be: ‘I don’t really know’.

“Thank you for telling me your feelings. It’s honestly nice to be liked by such a beautiful girl like you, Hitotsuba-san. But I don’t know you very well yet. So, I can’t provide you with an answer to your feelings right now.”

“That’s okay. In fact, that is exactly why you are my first love. You can’t answer because you don’t know Hitotsuba Kaede; you didn’t just accept me because of my appearance. And with such an answer, my liking for Yuya-kun is skyrocketing!”



I wonder if that is the case. I think it's important to know who the other person is before you fall in love with them. At least in my mind, my criteria for falling in love with a girl was whether it was fun to be with her and whether she wants to show her true self with me. There was also the question of whether they were able to see and understand the inner workings of me, Yoshizumi Yuya, properly. Otherwise, relationships would fall apart quickly when people were to start dating on looks alone. Well, in my case, I can't allow that to happen.

“Fufufu, even though I was somewhat too pushy, the strategy of breaking your guard was a success (Footnote: Originally an idiom, which meant: to remove obstacles in the way of one's objective.)! I don't know how yet, but someday I'm sure I'll get Yuya to say, 'I like you', and kiss me. Then I'll just push Yuya-kun down and... guhehe...”

So in her delusion, it was not me pushing her down; it was Hitotsuba-san pushing me down. Also, a girl of your age shouldn't be slobbering all over herself while saying “Guhehe”! Such a waste of your beauty! This would destroy the public perception of the dignified Hitotsuba Kaede.

“Oh... I'm not sure what to say, but I think I've learned something new about you. There's a big gap between you at school and at home.”

“Every human being wears a mask. It's also the same for you, Yuya-kun. While I'm not sure if it's conscious or unconscious for you, but the person you are now and the person you were when playing football are two different people. Of course, I meant that in a good way.”

I didn't know how others perceived me, but my friends often told me that I seemed like a different person on the soccer field than I thought I usually was. I was made aware that I could be a bit aggressive and egotistical, but I wasn't sure if that was the right term to describe me.

“If it's done unconsciously, then you aren't aware of it. By the way, which personality of mine do you think is the mask and which one would be my true self?”

“I don't know yet. You can be cute like you are now, or you can be cool like

you are at school. Well, I don't have any way to judge which one is your true nature, so to borrow your words, I guess we'll find out later."

I admire the cool Hitotsuba-san because she was dignified, cool and dependable even though she was a girl. Also, I find it cute when she makes a silly face when she is immersed in her fantasies or when she turns red with embarrassment.

"Yes, you're right. I also want to learn more about Yuya-kun's favorite foods, favorite types of women, sexual habits, favorite scenarios, and more. So, let's do our best together, shall we? By the way, my favorite situation is getting whispered in th-"

"STOOP! Let's talk about it another time. Let's get to know each other more normally first, okay?"

Whenever there seems to be an opportunity, she would just throw a bombshell at me with a straight face, and I would never be able to process it correctly! In addition, if it was just that, then I wouldn't be so flustered, but if you were to say it with an embarrassed expression while slightly turning your eyes away, my heart would be about to burst! I'd even like to suspect that this is all part of your calculated plan!

"Well. I was just kidding, Yuya-kun. It's time to start packing. We'll move on once we've wrapped up the bare minimum.

"Move? To where?"

"Isn't it obvious? To our love nest."

What? Is this living together already starting today?

# Chapter 8 The Love Nest of the Two People

It was now 9 pm. I was being driven in a foreign luxury car that could be rarely seen in the city. Next to me was the owner of the car, Hitotsuba-san, or rather the culprit who had summoned the car and its driver. Her beautiful and dignified face reminded me of an ice statue, and I couldn't help myself from gazing at her. However, I was too embarrassed to say those thoughts aloud.

“Hey, Hitotsuba-san. I'd like to know where this car is heading towards. Where am I going to be taken?”

“I told you, didn't I? We are heading to our love nest. It's all right, my father spent a lot of money to buy us the best apartment in this building.”

Was it really okay to have such an apartment, just like that?

‘Please give me the best apartment.’ How could you just casually have such a conversation as if you're making small talk? Even if you were to say, ‘It's fine, it's no problem’, I really would have preferred a lightly furnished apartment that I could be more at ease in.

Meanwhile, the scenery seen from the car window was moving closer and closer to the number one spot recommended for people to visit with their lover on a date.

“It's not that I'm doubting you, Hitotsuba-san, but that was a lie, wasn't it?”

“...?”

Please don't tilt your head. The gap between your dignified front and this cute gesture makes my heart skip a beat.

I took a deep breath and tried not to let my voice shake as I struggled to maintain my composure.

"N-no matter how you look at it, this is the popular bay area, right? Moreover, this area has recently been developed with more apartments focused on luxury just like a first-class hotel, right? I think it's a bit out of place for high school students like us to live here."

"Oh, you really know your stuff. It's essential for any businessperson to keep their ears open for any information. It's even more important if you want to become president. That's my Yuya-kun!"

Well, my sh\*tty dad had never been really sensitive to information. He never knew what the latest trend was until he saw it on TV; only then he would make his move.

So how do you anticipate and ride on the latest fads? Or how can you be the one who creates the trend? To figure this out, you have to gather information from wherever you could. It was just something I've been doing in between football practices, so it wasn't really as big of a deal as it sounded.

"If you are able to think in such a way at this point, it's good enough for me, don't you think? In the future, you should be able to carefully analyze the information collected under my father and learn to make the most of it. Yuya-kun, I'm sure you can do it."

The goddess was praising me while saying that she believed in me smilingly. The moonlight shining through the window illuminated her ethereal beauty, I shyly turned my head away from her, with my cheeks heating up. This was why the smile of a stunning beauty was so troubling.

"Oh my, the shy Yuya-kun is also cute.

Oh, we've just arrived, haven't we? This is our new home."

It was a brand new, ultra-luxurious building, the height of luxury I've been talking about. Seriously? I'm going to live in a place like this with Hitotsuba-san?

"The one on the highest floor is our apartment. Come on, let's go!"

She put her arms around mine. I nearly fainted out from the exquisite sensation. We got into the lift. Meanwhile, the suitcase with the minimal change of clothes will be brought to us by the driver later. I said I'd carry it, but he was adamant, and said with a wry smile that I shouldn't be taking his job away.

The lift was going up at an incredible speed. The numbers were changing at a dizzying pace, but the expression on Hitotsuba-san's face was the same as when she was in the car. No, if you were to look closely, you could see that her cheeks had turned redder.

When we finally got off the elevator a few minutes later, there was a door in front of us. With our arms linked, Hitotsuba-san led me into the apartment. As we walked through the front door into the living room, we were greeted by a truly spectacular view.

"Isn't the view breathtaking? What do you think? Do you like it?"

"Setting aside whether I like it or not, are we really going to live here? You're joking with me, right?"

"Unfortunately, this is reality. From now on, Yuya-kun will live in this house with me. Just the two of us. Don't worry. I'm a good cook. I'll make you anything you want to eat."

No, I can cook too, so let's take turns with the cooking duty. It's not good for a long term if it was left with just one of us. Wait, that wasn't the point of this conversation!

Anyways, this room was ridiculously spacious. The living/dining room alone occupied the size of nearly 30 tatami mats. There was a table for eating and chairs with a comfy design. There was also a sofa that seemed too big for just

two people to sit on, not to mention a ridiculously large TV for relaxing after dinner. Just how many inches was the TV even?

And last but not least, to make our evenings even more elegant, we could look at the glittering night view of the bay from the large window. With this as the background, we'll embrace and kiss passionately, and then... what was I imagining!?

"Yuya-kun, are you okay? Your face seems to be red....?"

"I'm fine! No problem at all! It's not like I was thinking about anything weird! No, that's not what I mean! We need to get to know each other better first! Impure love is a no-go!"

"Fufufu. You're a funny guy. But I also love how you try to be such a gentleman. As expected of you, Yuya-kun!"

Stop it! Don't raise your favorability towards me in your mind, Hitotsuba-san! Your excessive expectations will only crush me! I would lose sleep from worrying over how you would react if I don't live up to your expectations! Please don't say things like "As expected of you, Yuya-kun!". [TN: Reference to Shiba Miyuki from Mahouka Koukou No Rettousei: "As expected of you, Onii-sama!". Thanks to the Discord User Fui for pointing it out!] I don't want to be treated like a certain big brother.

"Well. It's a bit late, but let's have dinner."

Just as Hitotsuba-san said this, the doorbell rang. She checked the screen of the intercom and saw that the visitor was the driver from before. Thanking the driver, she opened the door for him.

"I'm sorry to keep you waiting, Yoshizumi-sama. The luggage you have brought along is-"

"Ta-da! Today's dinner has arrived! Come on, let's eat it before it gets cold!"

With a big smile on her face, Hitotsuba-san held up a box from a pizza parlor that was currently offering a 'buy two get one free' deal. Was it the driver

who went to the store to get it?

“Thank you, Miyamoto-san. Would you like to join us? You haven’t eaten dinner yet, have you?”

“No. My work is done here. Besides, I can’t bear to disturb the two of you. This old man will leave as soon as possible.”

With that, Miyamoto-san, the driver, bowed and left. He called himself an old man, and indeed his hair was almost gray. However, his back was straight and his voice full of vigor. Even when he bowed, he looked like an old gentleman with a touch of elegance.

“Miyamoto-san is a veteran driver who has been working as a chauffeur since my grandfather’s time. It’s no exaggeration to say that he’s like family to me. Well, he draws the line at that. But that’s not the point, let’s eat it before it gets cold!”

I was quite curious about when she ordered the pizza. I guess she must have ordered it while I was packing my necessities. She had even ordered a coke for good measure. It was surprising that a woman as classy as Hitotsuba-san would happily eat junk food.

“Hmmm. Now you know more about me, right?”

Oh, yes. I know exactly what you mean. I’ve learned that appearances can be deceiving. The image that people had of Hitotsuba Kaede was just a public perception. In reality, she was no different from any other high school girl.

“Once again, I look forward to living with you from now on, Yuya-kun.”

She handed me a Coke and I opened it, ready to blow away the fatigue of this turbulent day. But what blew towards me instead were the contents of the can, as the jet-black liquid spurted out like a fountain, drenching my face. The culprit was looking at me and laughing.

So that was one more thing I learned about her. Hitotsuba Kaede might not look like it, but she was quite a mischievous troublemaker.

## Chapter 9 I want to take a bath alone

The sneaky and childish prank of shaking an unopened can of Coke before handing it over left my face and clothes drenched and sticky. I wanted to complain about the vigor behind the shake, but seeing Hitotsuba-san who was smiling mischievously at the success of her prank, I decided against it in the end.

At any rate, we ate our pizza while it was still warm. There were two pizzas, one topped with meat and the other one with seafood. We were both hungry, and it had been quite a while since the last time either of us ate pizza. Between the two of us, we devoured the pizzas in no time at all.

“Well. Now that I’m full, I think I’ll have a bath. I can take a bath, right?”

“Of course. We’ve got gas, electricity and water all working, so you don’t have to worry about anything.”

Well, that was a relief. On the way to the bathroom, I explored the house. I opened the doors one by one in wonder but was utterly shocked by the bedroom. There was a king-sized bed with two pillows and a futon. It was like the bedroom of a loving couple. Was I meant to sleep here with Hitotsuba-san?

There was still some time left before bedtime, so I pushed that question to the back of my mind and headed for the bathroom. The bathtub here was also surprisingly large. There was enough room for both of us to stretch our legs and relax together. Huh, did I just think of taking a bath with Hitotsuba-san



someday?

“Oh no, thoughts like these..., did something in me just die?”

It might be just a matter of time until Reason-san and Decency-san joined the ranks of endangered species. Also, it wasn't hard to imagine why the delusions of adolescent boys could be dangerous. Normally, I wouldn't think of myself to be such a person, but when you suddenly start living together with a goddess-tier beauty like Hitotsuba-san, you never know what sort of mistakes you might end up committing.

“Oh, I don't mind if mistakes happen. In fact, I would even welcome them, wouldn't I?”

Huh, that wasn't my voice who said that! Before I knew it, Hitotsuba-san was standing behind me. Her arms were folded, and she had a calm expression, but her legs were shaking. She said she would welcome them, but clearly she was somewhat intimidated.

“...I'm not going to force myself on someone unwilling. You should only do that when both sides are in love with each other.”

“I haven't said anything yet, but I'm very happy that you think so, Yuya-kun. But still, you're always welcome, so please keep that in mind.”

Don't say things that make my heartbeat skyrocket! At this rate, it won't be long before I fall in love with you! ‘Sigh’, I huffed in annoyance. My fall from grace is probably already set in stone, but let me at least resist a little. I'd like to get to know you a little bit more, Hitotsuba Kaede.

“So, Yuya-kun, are you planning to take a bath alone?”

“... Hey, Hitotsuba-san. What's the point of saying these things if you're going to tremble like that?”

“... Huh, I'm not shaking, am I? The reason why it looks like that must be because Yuya-kun's eyeballs are shaking, isn't it? I'm perfectly normal, you know?”

Her voice was quivering, but pointing that out would only make her even more agitated. I shrugged my shoulders. Rinsing the bathtub with the showerhead, I then turned on the tap and pressed the heating button. The temperature of the water was 41° Celsius (Footnote: About 106° Fahrenheit). This was just right for a relaxing bath.

“Of course, I’ll go in alone. You can watch the TV, Hitotsuba-san. Don’t you dare try to peek!”

“Isn’t this just reverse psychology? If you’re told not to push, it makes you want to push. If you’re told not to peek, it makes you feel like charging in. In other words, Yuya-kun, you actually want to be peeped at. You’re just not being honest with me.”

... And you just didn’t want to listen to what people were saying. Also, shouldn’t it be the other way around? Normally Hitotsuba-san should be warning me not to peep at her when she’s taking a bath, right?

“Me? I would welcome you with open arms, wouldn’t I?”

If that’s the case, then why are you turning away and covering yourself with your arms? I’m really confused by your contradicting actions, so please match your words with your actions. Well, your red cheeks and pouting mouth were quite cute though.

“Yes, yes. Okay, fine. Then I’ll go and peek at you when I get the chance. But I don’t like to be peeped at, so please don’t do that.”

Ignoring Hitotsuba-san’s pouting which was quite cute, I took out my underwear, pajamas and bath towel from the suitcase I had packed. For some reason, the house was equipped with TVs, recorders, humidifying air purifiers, and other appliances, but no washing machines or refrigerators. There were pots, pans, and knives, but no tableware. What am I supposed to do without those?

“I say, we should go shopping tomorrow. We’ll go to an electronics store in the morning to pick out a washing machine and a refrigerator. Then we’ll go to Kappabashi (Footnote: A district in Tokyo for products for the kitchen

such as kitchen utensils.) to pick out some dishewares. I can pick them out on my own, but I want to go shopping with Yuya-kun...”

When I asked her about it while waiting for my bath to be ready, she told me that this was what she had planned to do. I could understand why a man and a woman who had just started cohabiting together would go shopping with each other, but should this really be applied to high school students? And what about the money? I mean, your father is the president of an electronics company, right? Why don't you just get them all there?

“My father said we should choose the things that are related to our daily life such as refrigerators and washing machines by properly looking at them ourselves and listening to the shopkeeper's recommendation. Isn't that so?”

I didn't have a choice in this matter, and if I had to say, I agreed with him. Most people think anything will do so long as it gets the job done, but when it comes to something that you use every day, it's better to check out the items personally before choosing. Besides, isn't it exciting to shop for your own appliances?

“Yeah, I also agree. We're going to live together from now on, so let's choose something we're both happy with. Hmm. I'm looking forward to tomorrow.”

It was like a dream. I thought I was going to become Taka-san's younger brother when my sh\*tty father fled overseas after getting into debt. But Hitotsuba-san saved me, and in return, we decided to live together and get married in the future, regardless of my intentions. To the outsiders, this might seem like a win-win situation. And in fact, I thought so too.

“Now that the bath is ready, let's go in. I'm going to wash your back.”

“Don't try to go in with me so naturally. Even if you're okay with it, I'm still embarrassed. So please stay outside.”

I gently flicked her forehead and headed into the bathroom alone before quickly locking the door to prevent any intrusion. The doorknob rattled.

“That’s strange! Yuya-kun! What should I do! The door won’t open!”

Hitotsuba-san was making a lot of noise, but I ignored it. The rattling sound was eventually replaced by knocks which then turned into loud bangs. But I also ignored all of these noises.

“Huh... I don’t want to become dependent on you.”

I wondered how many days I could endure. No, maybe I already...

I thought to myself as I slowly soaked myself in the bathtub.

... Oh right, there was also the bedroom problem. What should I do? Do we have to sleep side by side on the same bed?

# Chapter 10 Bedtime attack

“Why do you insist on sleeping alone, Yuya-kun?”

After Hitotsuba-san had taken a bath, it was time for bed. Finally, I was confronted with the biggest problem of all.

Huh? What did I do when Hitotsuba-san was taking a bath? Well, I was relaxing in the living room, watching a movie. And from the bathroom...

“Yuya-kun... Aren’t you coming to take a peek? The door is unlocked, you know?”

Don’t behave like a certain comedian in a pink vest saying, ‘Hey, who wants to enter my vacant room?’ (Footnote: Possibly referencing Toshiaki Kasuga. For more information, see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toshiaki\\_Kasuga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toshiaki_Kasuga)). Especially not in such a casual manner. Normally, the routine comedy gag would end with ‘Nobody’s going to go there’, but in this case, it felt more like the opposite. I tried my best to shake off the urge to leap at this opportunity.

I thought about the problem regarding the shared bedroom not only when I was waiting in the living room, but also during the time when I was soaking in the bath. That problem was such a confounding one, I felt like a philosopher wondering why the world couldn’t be free of conflicts.

So when the moment arrived, instead of wasting my time and effort in arguing pointlessly about it, I decided to selflessly declare I would be sleeping on the living room’s couch.

“No Yuya-kun, there’s no need to be so concerned. Why would you want to

sleep on the sofa when there's a bed that is big enough for two people to sleep side by side? Are you proposing a domestic separation on the very first day of living together? I'm gonna cry, okay?"

And now, Hitotsuba-san and I were sitting on either side of the bed, holding such a conversation. Hitotsuba-san, having come out freshly from the bath, looked twice as good as usual. I felt like if I were to get any closer, I might die from Hitotsuba-san's charm. I could feel my impending downfall.

"I would like to sleep in this top-quality bed if I could, alright? But you know, I don't think it's a good idea for a man and a woman who aren't dating to suddenly sleep on the same bed. No matter how good it is for you, it's not for me."

"Why not? ... Oh, I get it! You're worried that you'll attack me, aren't you? Isn't that right?"

Why did your face had such a happy expression while saying you might be attacked by me? And why are you moving so close to me!

I was so flustered that I fell off the bed. It hurts like h\*\*l.

"Yuya-kun! Are you okay!?"

"It's okay... I'm fine, just stay away from me. You smell so good, I'm going crazy."

The fresh citrus scent from Hitotsuba-san tickled my nose. I wonder if she knew I liked this kind of smell and had worn it for me. If that was the case, then I must admit, she was as good as a strategist like Zhuge Liang (Footnote: A Chinese military strategist. For more information: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhuge\\_Liang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhuge_Liang)). The fragrance of her shampoo and body wash mixed perfectly with each other. If I felt like giving in to my urges, I would hug her tightly.

"It's okay, isn't it? How about you hug me and cuddle me like a puppy? Although I'm a little embarrassed, I'll even stroke and pamper you, Yuya-kun."

“... Are you an esper?”

“I understand everything about Yuya-kun, you know?”

“Well, I’m just kidding. It’s that easy to tell from your face, Yuya-kun.”

Seriously? Was my expression that obvious? It was beyond embarrassing to let Hitotsuba-san know that I was holding back my desire to hug her! No, I won’t give in to my desires so easily! I will not give in!

“... I understand. If it were up to me, I would have liked to fall asleep while snuggling you, but it seems like I would have to give up. But! I still want Yuya-kun to sleep on the same bed as me. If you sleep on the couch of the cold living room without a futon, you will easily catch a cold. Oh, but if you want me to nurse while you’re sick, then that’s a different story. Hmmm, I suppose that’s a good thing too...”

Drifting into a reverie, Hitotsuba-san’s fantasy time began. At first, her face was stern, but gradually, like when she had reached out to help me with my father’s debt, her mouth softened and eventually, it formed a slack-jawed grin. I wondered what kind of weird story the girl was drawing in her head for her to close her eyes and make such an expression.

“Hehe... hehe... Yuya, you’re sweating. I’ll wipe it off for you. So please, don’t be a child and take your clothes off... Ah, what a fine back... hehehe...”

“I’m not taking my clothes off nor letting you get close to me in your fantasy!”

I shouted and gently hand chopped her head, bringing her back to reality, as she was getting a bit too immersed in her fantasy world. Ah, please don’t make any cute noises while getting hit.

“Ouch, I was having such a good time with you ... Why did you do this? That was terrible, Yuya-kun. Let’s sleep together as punishment. I won’t forgive you if you don’t.”

“... Okay, okay, okay. We can sleep together, alright? But I’ll keep as much distance as possible. I’m not a bad sleeper nor a hugger, so I think you’ll be fine, but I don’t want anything to happen to me.”

“But I’m not a good sleeper and I have a tendency to hug people, so if it happens when I’m asleep, please do forgive me!”

“If you do, I’ll tear us apart without mercy. I mean it.”

“Huh. Yuya-kun’s sweetness lies in the fact that you won’t just knock me off the bed. I like that about you.”

I turned my face away when she smiled at me as she once again said something that made my cheeks burn. How does she use the word ‘like’ so casually?

“Aside from my family, I only ever said ‘I like’ to Yuya-kun. It’s not a light word for me, so please don’t take it the wrong way.”

It seemed that my expression was really easy to understand. Her words only made my cheeks feel even hotter. Not wanting my face to be seen any more, I desperately half-crawled into the covers. There were times where a man is required to make tactical retreats.

“Yuya-kun, please go to bed first. I’ll go dry my hair. Well then, good night.”

“... Good night.”

Turning off the light in the bedroom, Hitotsuba-san left. I desperately tried to close my eyes and dive into the dream, but I was too nervous to do so. The faint sound of the hairdryer seemed awfully loud. When it stopped, Hitotsuba-san came back and climbed into the bed, being careful not to make any noise.

But she didn’t say a word. She immediately began to breathe softly in a pleasant sleep.

“... Give me a break. How am I supposed to hold myself back...”



I wasn't calm enough to fall asleep smoothly without any trouble when the cutest high school girl in Japan was sleeping right next to me. It was only when the sun had begun to rise that I finally succumbed to the sleep demon.

# Chapter 11 The Morning Bath Incident

I couldn't get a good night's sleep thanks to the fact that the cutest high school girl in Japan was sleeping right next to me peacefully in her cute and fuzzy pajamas.

I got up slowly when I left the bed so as to avoid waking up Hitotsuba-san, who was still dreaming peacefully. In contrast to her, my head felt heavy from a lack of sleep. I was mentally and physically exhausted from all the things that had happened yesterday, but now I really felt like I had been hit with a severe blow. At times like this, a long soak in a hot tub was the only way to relax.

I turned the faucet on, letting the water heat up. Meanwhile, I took out the gaming console I had brought from home and connected it to the TV. Unlike the cheap TV we had at home, this one right here was the latest 4K OLED TV. It will definitely make the in-game world more beautiful than before. The gameplay would also be smoother and easier on the eyes. It would be absolutely amazing.

“But I shouldn't play it... should I?”

I sighed as I unplugged the cable. It was fun for me to play, but how would Hitotsuba-san feel if she saw me playing it? I'm sure I'd feel lonely if my live-in partner didn't pay attention to me despite being in the same space. Hitotsuba-san might feel that way too. So, I have decided to be patient.

“Well, I guess I can do it when Hitotsuba-san isn't around...”

However, I was also involved in club activities, so I won't have much time. This meant I would have to wait until after she goes to bed. Playing games in the morning was something I wasn't really a fan of.

There was still some time for the bath to be ready. I was thinking about what to eat for breakfast, when I realized there was no food in this house. Also, there wasn't any refrigerator in this house. How am I going to eat breakfast?

"Good morning, Yoshizumi-sama."

"Whoa! Oh, Miyamoto-san! How? Where did you come from?"

The driver from yesterday, Miyamoto-san, was standing there as if it was natural for him to appear. In his hand, he was holding two bags from McDonald's. [TL: Not in the original, but the term 'from the hamburger chain known as M' sounds too long.] What? Could it be that you delivered them to me knowing there was nothing in this flat?

"Yes, I did. I brought breakfast for the two of you."

Even Miyamoto-san can read my thoughts!? Errr, I mean, why are we having hamburgers in the morning? It's not easy on the stomach, is it?

"This was a request from Kaede-sama. She contacted me last night to ask if you would be interested in trying something called 'breakfast munchies'."

Hitotsuba-san's request, huh! Yesterday was pizza and now this for breakfast, could it be secretly, you actually like junk food!? Well, it's okay, I don't mind either way, but I'm starting to get worried about what you said yesterday about serving homemade food.

"Please don't worry about that. Kaede-sama's cooking may be a little unique, but I can guarantee the taste. I would recommend you to eat this before it gets cold, but why don't you take a bath first?"

A ring sounded in the bathroom, announcing the end of the heating process. If I could, I would wake up the sleeping Hitotsuba-san so we could enjoy the meal together before it went too cold, but I didn't want the money spent on

the gas for heating the bath to be wasted.

“It’s okay. Kaede-san is weak on holidays and saturday mornings. She probably won’t wake up yet. I believe it would be best if you wake her up after you have finished your bath quickly.”

“So, you knew I planned to wake her up. Well, I guess that’s something to consider. Thank you for coming all this way, Miyamoto-san.”

“No, no, no. This is part of my job. Besides, you’re going out today, right? I’ll go with you, so please take care of me.”

Miyamoto-san bowed politely and left the house. From the way he was talking, I’m guessing the shopping trip would be escorted by a driver. How extravagant.

But I was more interested in the bath now. Miyamoto-san’s appearance had momentarily distracted me, but I’m still going in! According to him, Hitotsuba-san was weak on holiday mornings and shouldn’t be waking up yet, so I’m sure I can soak slowly without worrying. So let’s take a relaxing bath without any hesitation!

After taking a hot shower to warm up my cold body, I dove into the big tub. Oh, it was so relaxing. It was so nice to be able to soak in a bath with enough room to stretch out both legs. It felt absolutely wonderful.

“How would you feel if you could take a bath with the prettiest high school girl in Japan in such a big tub?”

“Of course it would be great. If I could take a bath with Hitotsuba-san, I would have used up all my luck in life right then and there.”

“Oh. Then you can rest assured that your good fortune will last a lifetime. Because we’ll be together every day.”

“Huh? I get to take a bath with Hitotsuba-san every day? That’s awesome... huh, wai-!”

The moment the bathroom door opened, I regretted what I had unconsciously

said, but at the same time, the world seemed to have slowed down.

Hitotsuba-san had a celestial-like smile on her face, or rather a smirk, as she intruded into the bathroom.

## Chapter 12 Kaedes assault!

Hitotsuba-san entered with a bath towel tightly wrapped around her body along with the following objective: To ruin my elegant morning bath time. I tried my best to look at the opposite direction in order to prevent myself from being blinded by her two distracting bombs that were clearly visible even though they were covered by the towel. In my mind, I desperately counted prime numbers.

“Why did you come in here, Hitotsuba-san!? You knew I was in here, right!? You’re doing this on purpose, aren’t you!?”

“That’s because when I woke up, Yuya-kun who was supposed to be next to me wasn’t there. I was so sad and lonely. So, I thought I should have him heal my sadness, even if it’s only for a minute or two. Was that wrong?”

Of course, it was! My rationality would evaporate instantly!

“But to leave the bathroom door unlocked this morning when it was tightly closed yesterday... Can I assume that you’ve succumbed to your desires within less than a day? Oh my, why are you hiding your face?”

“T... t——that’s because Hitotsuba-san... aren’t you naked right now!?”

Even with a bath towel wrapped around her, I could still see her flawlessly milky skin and slender legs that were beyond the standards of any high school student’s. Not to mention, the fact that she wasn’t completely naked somehow made her seem even more erotic than if she would have. Don’t look, don’t look, I mustn’t look!

“Oh, you’re surprisingly innocent, aren’t you? If you’re a boy, shouldn’t you

jump at any opportunity to gaze at the female body? Don't you want to look at me...?"

Of course I want to!

I would love to, but I'm afraid that if I did, it would mark the end of my bitter struggles of maintaining my rationality. I'm convinced that only she can push me to such an extent.

No, no! I'm fine. I'll be fine. But I don't even know what's considered fine anymore!

"Don't worry, Yuya-san. I've got a towel wrapped tightly around me. I'm also a little embarrassed by the whole thing. So... open your eyes?"

The last part said by Hitotsuba-san was in a small whisper. Hearing what she had said shyly, I slowly opened my eyes, albeit with apprehension. I looked at where she was standing and saw that indeed, her towel was still intact.,

"See, this should be fine, right?"

"Yes... Hmm? But is it? No, I don't think it's fine..."

Think calmly. Don't get carried away by the situation. She was planning to take a bath, and that bath towel might come off while she is taking a shower. Or it might come off accidentally when she's soaking in the bathtub.

Suddenly, I realized a possibility as to why she might have been so bold.

"Oh, I see! You're wearing a bathing suit underneath! You will take off the towel to make me flustered, but then to my dismay, I'll see that you're actually wearing a bathing suit! That's what you're planning! Are you feeling very surprised right now, since I've guessed your intention?"

"... Huh. As expected of Yuya-kun. I would like to praise you for arriving at that answer, but I'm sorry. I went above and beyond. Because..."

I'm not wearing anything. See."

Kazuha-san flipped her bath towel open with a quick snap of her wrists. My vision was suddenly filled with the naked figure of a goddess. I unintentionally yelled at her for breaking her promise., She was beautiful, though! Her skin was smooth, healthy, and looked so pale that it made me wonder if she had ever been exposed to the sun.. It was a man's dream come true to be able to gaze at those two unrestrained fruits bouncing in the air.. I thought I simply had to touch them and feel their softness, but even just staring at them from here made me happy. No, that's not the point!





“Why did you have to break your promise, you idiot——!”

“Because ..... the best way to understand each other is through our naked bodies and intimacy, right?”

“That could only be applied at night in bed though!?”

“Oh, my. Then later, I want you to say something like ‘I’m not letting you sleep tonight, my little kitten.’.”

You’re too cute for your own good, damn it!

As I screamed silently in my head, I jumped out of the bath. I could hear Hitotsuba-san’s desperate pleas, but I ignored them. If I were to stay in the bath with her, my mind would certainly become corrupted.

“Mouu... Yuya-kun is being uncooperative again...”

I felt like I heard Hitotsuba-san’s devilish dialogue as she licked her lips.

# Chapter 13 How long until the fall

It had been a terrible morning, but in a way, I was happy about that incident. I fixed my gaze towards the TV as I bit into my now, completely cold breakfast.

“Hey Yuya-kun. What do you want to shop for first? I would like to look at the tablewares first and then shop for the appliances. What do you think, Yuya-kun?”

Hitotsuba-san was saying something, but I ignored her. Normally, I would have said: ‘Considering the opening time, I agree with that idea’, but after what had happened this morning, she needed to reflect a little.

“Hey Yuya-kun. What kind of tableware do you like? Is it a married couple’s tea set? And how much rice do you eat? For that, we need rice bowls. And curry dishes? There’s a lot of room for storage, so let’s look around.”

No, no, no. Don’t answer. I have a thing for curry and pasta dishes, but that won’t break my resolve to ignore her. Concentrate on the TV.

“What should we do about the appliances? Since we’re high school students, I think it’s better to get a big refrigerator so that we can prepare our own lunches. If we have a high-quality rice cooker, the rice will taste good even after it gets cold, and if we have a good microwave, you can make a variety of dishes. Oh, you know what, Yuya-kun? The latest microwave can even make pasta! Isn’t that amazing!”

It’s amazing how convenient it was to make pasta in a microwave nowadays, it didn’t even need to be boiled! (Footnote: Surprisingly, it’s not sarcasm.) It

would also be nice to have rice that still tastes good even after reheating since it would be always cold by the time lunchtime arrives. My rice cooker always turned the rice yellowish and hard if I tried to use it to keep the rice warm..

I mean, don't you know a lot about home appliances, Hitotsuba-san?

"I would choose a drum-type washing machine. This sort of machine automatically loads detergent and fabric softener so nothing is wasted, and it only takes 98 minutes from washing to drying. This way, even if Yuya-kun operates it after coming home from club activities, I can still fold them all by the time you go to bed."

Even if I didn't have to dry it, I could help out with folding them. However, it was indeed very helpful for the machine to automatically load the detergent and fabric softener that had been placed into it beforehand. I always got confused and just threw everything in carelessly. You really know a lot, Hitotsuba-san!

"I'm the only daughter of an electronics manufacturer, so this much is common knowledge for me."

"Hahaha. That's great, Hitotsuba-san. I don't know anything about home appliances."

"Normally, it should be the other way around. But that's not the point. You're finally talking to me. Are you still angry with me for suddenly barging during your bath?"

Oops. I reacted normally.

"Don't worry. I'm sure you're in a good mood because I probably, probably, 'maybe', won't do it again!"

I was impressed by her beautiful pronunciation of the English word 'maybe', but I was 100% sure that she definitely planned to do the same thing in the future again. I couldn't find any element of reassurance, and if anything, I grew more despondent by her words.

“Next time... I will do it on the bed like Yuya-kun asked. So, please forgive me, nyan.”

“... Fine, I’ll make a special exception, but... only for this time, you know! If you ever do something like that again, I really won’t talk to you anymore! ... For three hours!”

There were no men that wouldn’t give in when a beautiful girl was smiling at him and pawing like a cat.. It was only natural for me to give in!

“Fufufu, I love it when you say things like this, Yuya-kun. It’s adorable.

Now that we’ve had breakfast, let’s get ready quickly. Even though Miyamoto-san will be picking us up, shopping consumes time and energy. If we don’t move early, it’ll be late when we arrive back home.”

“Ah... I see. All right, I’ll go get ready.”

I got up from my chair. In my case, getting ready didn’t take that much time. All I had to do was to change my clothes, lightly set my hair and wait.

Why do I have to do my hair? It’s a measure to look a little more befitting when standing side by side with a beautiful girl who’s super cute like a goddess.

“Don’t worry. You look cool enough as you are now. Besides, it’s Yuya’s nature that I like more than anything else. Your appearance is secondary. It doesn’t matter what anyone says, so don’t get worked up about it, okay?”

I sighed and scratched my head. I wasn’t sure why but what Hitotsuba-san said made me happy and embarrassed at the same time. She was even smiling. The sight of it was too dazzling.

Still, I wanted to be a man worthy of standing next to her.

I was already starting to feel that way on the first morning of our first day together.

# Chapter 14 Like a Newlywed Couple

We left the house at 10 am and proceeded towards Kappabashi (Footnote: A district in Tokyo for products for the kitchen such as kitchen utensils.) as planned, shopping for various tableware. There were different varieties of stylish tableware to choose from, making it hard for us to select one. Not only that, but there were also a variety of equipment used in festivals, food sample stores and more. Overall, it was a really fun town just to explore. Also, what was extremely cute to observe were Hitotsuba-san's eyes, sparkling and displaying her innocent charm filled with excitement.

After lunch, we entered an electronics store in Ikebukuro (Footnote: A commercial and entertainment district in Japan.) and bought a set of home appliances, including a refrigerator, which was surprisingly a difficult decision.

Recalling a TV program about how the shopkeepers donning glasses and with thin wrinkles seemed to be the most knowledgeable in their field, Hitotsuba-san approached a shopkeeper who fit the description and enquired him about this and that.

The clerk wasn't bothered about us being high school students and he patiently listened to our requirements with regards to our necessity and performance. He then suggested products one by one that would suit our needs. The conversation was remarkably fascinating, and he even offered us a discount. What seemed more interesting was that the more I listened to him, the more I was convinced of buying home appliances from Hitotsuba Electronics. That's the Hitotsuba Group for you.

Still, the conversation lasted exceedingly long, and it was past 7 pm when we were finished with the procedures and paid the bill.

Today's shopping was mainly done by Hitotsuba-san, and I was kind of accompanying her, but of course I gave my opinion wherever necessary. While it was easy to be a simple yes-man (Footnote: Somebody who says yes to everything.), Hitotsuba-san and I were living together. It would be wrong to just leave it to her.

What should also be mentioned was that the payment was made entirely in cash in one single, huge lump. When she pulled out a bundle of cash from a thick, sealed envelope, even the enthusiastic sales clerk at the electronics store froze up. I couldn't keep my mouth closed either.

"My father entrusted me with some of his personal funds. In return, I have to report what appliances I bought. So, can you give me your card so I can mention him your name?"

"... Yes, yes!"

The clerk handed the business card to Hitotsuba-san with his hands trembling a bit. Hitotsuba-san smiled like a goddess as she accepted it.

"Thank you very much. Thanks to you, I had a very pleasant shopping experience today. I'll be sure to inform my father about you."

After that, the clerk probably went on a career path that eventually could lead him to the executive level, but that's another story.

"What do you want to do, Yuya-kun? Do you wish to have dinner at home?"

"No, I'm indeed tired today. If we were to start cooking something fancy when we arrive home, it would be too late, so why don't we grab a bite to eat and then head home? Or if you want to eat a simple pasta or something, I can make it for you..."

To begin with, there was no food back home. Fortunately, the refrigerator would be delivered first thing tomorrow morning, so we should be able to

make it at least one night this time of winter. The supermarkets would still be open, and it wouldn't consume much time to make pasta even if we bought it at random.

"Yuya-kun, you want to make it for me? You're tired, but you... still want to do that?"

"Of course, I would love to eat Hitotsuba-san's homemade food, but it doesn't have to be today. Besides, we would have plenty of opportunities to do so... in the future, wouldn't we?"

"Yes, yes, of course! Then tomorrow I will be showing off my skills to you, Yuya-kun, so please be prepared! Now that's decided, let's hurry up and meet up with Miyamoto-san and head to the supermarket! I'm really looking forward to Yuya-kun's home cooking!"

She pulled me by the hand with the biggest smile of the day, and we left the store.

I said I'd make pasta, but what exactly should I make? I wondered if Hitotsuba-san would like it. I was both excited and anxious to see what kind of look she would give me while eating my dish, but the thought that this kind of day would become a part of my daily life was enough to warm my heart.



# Chapter 15 A Man's Cooking

“It’s time... for Yuya-kun’s cooking special’s first session! Let’s go, let’s go!”

It was almost 9 pm by the time we arrived home after shopping from the supermarket. Although it was a little too late for dinner it couldn’t be helped. I was more concerned that Hitotsuba-san’s seemed somehow more excited than when we were shopping, but let’s begin with cooking right away.

“Chef Yuya-kun. What’s on the menu today?”

“Today, I’m thinking of making peperoncino (Footnote: He means Spaghetti Aglio Olio Peperoncino, a simple pasta dish consisting of spaghetti, olive oil, garlic and italian chili peppers.). I normally prefer tomato sauce or meat sauce, but since I need time to simmer it, I’ll leave that for some other time.”

First, bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. In the meantime prepare the other ingredients. Mince two cloves of garlic, remove the seeds of the chili pepper and chop the leaves of all the parsley.

When the water comes to a boil, add the pasta. Let the pasta cook for about a minute shorter than normally required for spaghetti (Footnote: Also known als ‘pasta al dente’.). This would allow the pasta to have a soft texture when it would be heated afterwards by combining it with the sauce, so it would attain the right consistency after it is finished.

When the pasta is almost done boiling, combine the garlic and chili pepper that you just cut into pieces into a frying pan with olive oil and fry them slowly over low heat. The key is to shake the pan consistently in order to

prevent burning. [TL: Or you could just stir with a wooden spoon or chopsticks like a normal person.] If the garlic seems fragrant, add the parsley for flavor.

From here on out, it was all about timing. Turn off the heat of the sauce. Add a ladleful of boiling water to the pan over high heat. Mix the water thoroughly with the olive oil, then add the pasta and toss it around to let it get coated with the sauce.

“Yeah. Just about right.”

The saltiness was just about perfect. I put the dish on the plates we bought, added some pepper with additional chili peppers that I took out, and I was done.

“Wow. You’re amazing, Yuya-kun. You’re very skillful with your hands, and you’re good at preparing the food. I can’t do it like this, so I quite envy you. In fact, aren’t you a better cook than me?”

“... Well, my mother was a good cook, and I don’t mind cooking, so I did it from time to time. Still, I’m looking forward to seeing your home-cooked meals, Hitotsuba-san.”

We sat down at the table facing each other for a late dinner. The smell of olive oil and garlic stimulated my appetite. The seasoning was rather simple, but the result was a decently salty and not too dry dish, which was a relief. The pepper that I sprinkled at the end also added a nice, extra touch.

“Mmm! It’s delicious! The strong aroma of garlic mixed with the freshness of parsley makes it very easy to consume. The pepper flavor also works wonders! Are you a genius, Yuya!?”

“... If something like this could be called genius, then all the chefs in the world would be gods and the holders of Michelin stars would be the creators or something.”

“It’s okay. The only chef for me is Yuya-kun. No matter what anyone else says, Yuya-kun’s food is delicious.”

I scratched my cheek. It was the first time I have ever served food to anyone other than my parents, so I was honestly incredibly happy to hear Hitotsuba-san say it was delicious with a big smile on her face. I was even more embarrassed than ever before.

“But I can’t lose to this one either. I’ll be cooking tomorrow, so please look forward to it, okay? I’ll make you something you like, Yuya-kun!”

“Do you know about what I might like?”

“Of course. What Yuya-kun likes the most is hamburgers! You usually eat pastries, but on days when the cafeteria serves hamburgers, you always get that. What do you think? Is it wrong?”

“... No, that’s correct. But how do you know I never miss a hamburger in the school cafeteria?”

I’m sorry to say, but that seems a little scary, Hitotsuba-san. Where on earth did you get such information? If a famous person like you had been collecting information about me or even following me, I’m sure word would have gotten out in no time.

“Huh-uh-uh. That’s sweet, Yuya-kun. The sources are not just limited to students. The people who provided me with this information were the people working in the school cafeteria!”

Why were you telling stuff about me to her, cafeteria lady! But that was it, huh? She knew I was hungry from club activities, and she even sneaked leftovers for me sometimes.

“Of course. Even from Yuya-kun’s preferences to what he doesn’t like. She also told me what you like to talk about with your friends. I also now know that Yuya-kun’s current obsession is the recently released fantasy game, right? And what I also might know or not is that you also used to talk about how that childhood friend heroine with huge b\*\*\*\*\*s was the most attractive...”

How come you could hear our conversation with pinpoint accuracy, auntie! Is

there a hidden camera or a listening device somewhere? I'm now too scared to go to the cafeteria!

"I'm sure the lady in the cafeteria has her secrets. Also... I was the one who asked her to provide the leftovers from the school cafeteria to you, Yuya-kun. Ah, don't ask me how I could have done that, okay? It's prohibited to ask!"

My heart went 'kyuun' when she put her index finger on my mouth. Also, what she just said along with that cuteness she displayed was just like a certain character in a light novel. That big-boobed, clumsy character was amazing.

"It seems you know that story well, Hitotsuba-san."

"Yes. That story is incredibly famous. I've read it too. But I liked the quiet girl in the literature club better than the big-boobed, clumsy character."

I was surprised to learn that Hitotsuba-san actually read that light novel too. And oddly enough, I also liked the mute character the most among the main characters. Why was that? Because I think it's great when a normally unemotional girl slowly turns into a sweetheart.

We enjoyed that late dinner while talking about such trivial things.

## Chapter 16 What Yuya-kun likes...

As I was relaxing after finishing my pasta and washing the dishes, Hitotsuba-san remembered something suddenly and asked.

“Speaking of which. Do you still play that fantasy game, Yuya-kun? You haven’t finished the story yet, have you?”

It was true that I was only halfway through the story, just as Hitotsuba-san had mentioned. An hour or two before I went to bed would usually be the perfect time for me to play this game.

“But with you here I can’t just play the game. It would be too boring for you to just watch, wouldn’t it? After all, it would be only me who would be enjoying the game, right?”

It would be fine if it was a game that could be enjoyed by both of them, like a multiplayer game or a co-op game. However, that game being mentioned was a single player RPG game. If she happened to watch from the beginning, we both could have enjoyed the story together, but I am already at the middle part of the story. This makes it impossible for her to have fun with me while gaming.

“Hmmm, that’s true, but you don’t have to hold back because of me, okay? If you want, you can tell me the story or something. Then we can enjoy it together, right?”

It was a reasonable thing to say, and a genuinely nice offer for me. I was incredibly happy to hear it because she was trying hard to enjoy something which only I liked, together with me. I considered it to be a particularly

important aspect to share hobbies with someone because then it would make you feel happy and enable you to feel each other's warmth while doing the same things together.

But there was another reason why I had wanted to refuse. Was it wrong that I wanted to hide my sexual preferences from a girl?

I had a childhood friend with huge b\*\*\*\*\*s who was a member of my party, and I loved her. No matter how strong the enemy, I would use her as much as possible. Yes, she was what I would call my favorite character. But this fact would embarrass me if known by girls, let alone my male friends. No, not just embarrassment, but the mental damage I might receive, would make it impossible for me to show my face anymore.

But just as I was wondering how I could excuse myself, since directly saying something like this would be revealing my sexual interests, Hitotsuba-san dropped a bombshell on me.

“Yuya-kun, do you like women with big... b\*\*\*\*\*s, like the childhood friend heroine in the game?”

“... Huh? What are you saying?”

“Well, I think I'm just as good as her! I'm sure of that!”

Hitotsuba-san's face closed towards mine. The two fruits dangerously dangled closely to one another with their smooth surface touching one another. Furthermore, she was wearing a ribbed knit dress with a silhouette that fit her body perfectly. That intensified her beauty more aggressively than usual. The posture of leaning forward together with her b\*\*\*\*\*s resting on the table was also bad for my eyes.

“Hey, Yuya-kun. Am I... not that attractive? I've been voted as the cutest high school girl in Japan, you know?”

“No... that's... that's...”

“I see, you don't think of me like that... I'm so sad I'm going to cry...”

Hitotsuba-san cried, deliberately holding her face in one hand and imitating to cry. But it was quite obvious that she was just pretending which could be inferred from how she was glancing at me through her fingers. Well, I've been beaten up too many times yesterday and this morning, so let's fight back here.

"Huh, Hitotsuba-san... you say, you are not attractive? How could that be? You may not know this, but I was one of the people who admired you. I thought you were just a diligent girl, but you turned out to be also a funny girl who enjoys talking. The way you behave is so cute, and the way you seduce me whenever you get a chance, and the way your face turns red is also cute. So, when a girl like you tells me I can do whatever I want with you, normally I wouldn't be able to withstand my urges!"

I leaned forward, slapping the table with an excessive amount of force. Hitotsuba-san's shoulders shook with fear. But while I could see the fear in her eyes, was there anticipation also mixed in? Or was that just my wishful delusion?

"Look, all men are wolves, okay? If you are too playful, I'll... seriously attack you, you know? Do you really want that?"

My voice was trembling, and my hands were shaking as I said this. This forceful act wasn't something I was used to performing, but I hoped this would make Hitotsuba-san feel a little better about herself. In truth, she was too tempting, so please don't say anything rash to make me feel nervous.

But this was a completely bad move. It totally backfired. Because Hitotsuba-san gently held my face in her hands and brought her own face close to mine. What? Wait! You're too close! The tip of your nose is touching mine! I've got your beautiful, soft, peach-colored lips right in front of me!

"I am, Yuya-kun. I really think that you and I can..., you know?"

"H-Hitotsuba-san... But that's..."

"I know. I know, I understand. However, ... I'm not going to hold back once you fall in love with me for real."

Hitotsuba-san licked her tongue with a sharp, glazed look just like a predator. My heartbeat could be heard loudly. I couldn't believe she was my classmate, because now she was so bewitching that I even had to gulp. I was afraid I was going to succumb like this.

"So, first of all, why don't we shorten the distance? Of course, I don't mean further from where we are now, I mean the distance between our hearts."

At this point, Hitotsuba-san let me go. I let out a dumb 'Ah', feeling a little regretful. Smiling, Hitotsuba-san continued her story.

"Don't you think it's unfair that I'm the only one who calls you 'Yuya-kun' with your forename? I also want you to call me 'Kaede' instead of 'Hitotsuba-san'. Can't you...?"

A change from her bewitching expression. She now looked up at me with dull, moist eyes, like the Chihuahua that was currently dominating the commercials, and despite it being winter, my forehead began to sweat. I gulped down my saliva again, and a moment of silence descended over the living room.

But. This game of staring that began so abruptly, soon came to an end. There was no way I could win this game...

"Okay. I understand. I've lost, Kaede."

I was really embarrassed about this. I could feel that my face was so red like a fire-breathing level of redness, right now. But Kaede's face was also just as impressive, her cheeks turned as red as a tomato at the time of harvest.

"I'm so glad... thank you, Yuya-kun!"

The smile that appeared on her face along with her cheeks colored crimson like the setting sun seemed like a manifestation of an angel, and all I could do was to remain embarrassed.



# Chapter 17 I'm still scared of Sakurako-san

It was Monday, the first day of the week. I was holding back a yawn as I prepared myself for the day.

Well, what did I do on Sunday? I took a day off from club activities and went home to organize my stuff. Of course, it was hard work. Reorganizing my stuff consumed quite some time.

I collected my clothes and personal belongings, packing them into cardboard boxes. The rest of the stuff was to be sorted out by a contractor and managed by Hitotsuba-san, or rather Kaede's mother, Sakurako-san.

"It is just luggage left behind by people who left their only son and fled abroad. If it were me, I would have disposed of it. I'll take care of it though, because I have to keep some mementos for your wedding with Kaede."

'What a thing to say', I retorted wryly. Well, my parents were idiots, but also foolish. They would always come to my soccer games to cheer me on while taking pictures and videos.

Of course, I also had stored a large number of albums, including photos from my childhood, and to be honest, I was somewhat embarrassed to have Kaede's mother manage them.

"It's not fair that only mom enjoys them! Please let me see them too! It's forbidden to monopolize and love the shota version of Yuya-kun!"

"You are living with Yuya-kun right now, so you can love and be loved by

him all you want, right? But I can't, you know? So just use your own imagination!"

"No, you can't! Yuya-kun is my Yuya-kun. So, I have the sole right to any portraits of Yuya-kun, even when he was little. Mom, you should make out with dad."

I wanted to tell them that my portrait rights were mine, but I was in no mood to do so. From the conversation, I wasn't sure if Sakurako-san was a shota lover or not. No, wait a minute, imagine that. If a sharp, strong woman like Sakurako-san were to spoil me gently, then my sexual interests would be greatly distorted.

"Ara ara, what's wrong, Yuya-kun? Could it be that you imagined...?"

"Yuya-kun! No, you can't do that! No, not my mother! She may be kind at first, but her true nature is a witch, cunning like a poisonous snake! I'll do the best I can, all you have to do is look only at me!"

"Oh my. If you're already constraining him on the second day of living together, you're going to lose his affection, you know? Yuya-kun. What do you think? Why don't you try the charm of a mature woman after this? Don't worry, I'll keep it a secret from my husband."

Kaede was shouting and stomping the ground adorably. Just what was Sakurako-san thinking? Well, her eyes seemed to laugh, so it was obvious that she was just joking. So, was she having fun teasing Kaede? That would make sense. Was she teasing the girl who was in love for the first time, enjoying her reaction and at the same time testing me?

"It's a very tempting offer, but I will have to politely decline. I'm a sincere person. Besides, I can't go against the debt of gratitude I owe my parents for wiping my a\*s."

"Yuya-kun... you're so wonderful..."

Why are you staring at me with your hands clasped together and a blush on your cheeks, Kaede? I said I'm a sincere person, but I haven't said I like you

yet.

“Oh dear... am I losing out on this one bet? You’re really showing me how it should be done, Yuya-kun. It’s hard to believe you’re Kotaro’s son, but you’re such a sweetheart compared to him. His school days were... well, let’s leave that for another time.”

Hey, you sh\*tty dad! What did you do in your school days!? Sakurako-san’s eyes seemed to lit up with hatred for a moment!

“Kaede. You can’t let go of Yuya-kun. He’s a sweet and gentlemanly boy, which is rare nowadays. He’ll always look out for you.”

“I know. I will definitely make him my prisoner no matter what I have to do!”

Can you guys talk about this when I’m not around, please? I’m not sure what you’re nodding your head about, Sakurako-san? And Kaede, you say you’ll use any means necessary, but what exactly are you planning to do? If possible, I want you to handle things peacefully.

“Good idea, Kaede. You must captivate Yuya-kun’s body and soul. The technique you need to do that is...”

“STOO—AP!! What are you trying to tell your own daughter!? Can you please keep this to yourself!?”

No! No! She’s your daughter and you’re her mother!

Judging from the way she said it, Sakurako-san was quite skilled and definitely a professional in such seduction techniques. If such knowledge were to be mastered by a brilliant person like Kaede, I would definitely succumb. I would be corrupted in so many ways!

“Ugh... Why did you interrupt us, Yuya-kun? It might be important information in order to keep the night burning hot...”

“Uh-huh. That’s right. It’s good to try these things out with each other. That way, you both can enjoy it even more and deepen your love for each other.”

Sakurako-san continued to speak while patting Kaede's shoulder, who had broken down in tears.

“But I'm happy for you, Kaede. It means that the sincere Yuya-kun will accept you even if you are not good at it. You'll just have to work hard together. I can still teach you my technique when you get stuck in a ..... rut. It's okay, Kazuhiro-san also got a boner with that technique, so Yuya-kun will be impressed then.”

Kazuhiro-san, so is my father-in-law the one to blame? Well, I can understand you couldn't resist if a beautiful woman like Sakurako-san were to take the initiative. But to make a person like Kaede do what I want is somewhat...

“Hmmm. I thought that Yuya-kun was a M, but he seems to have some S elements in him. In fact, he's probably the dominant one in bed. Kaede, do your best, okay?”

“Yes, yes! Yuya-kun! I'll do my best!”

I could only nod my head with a twitching face. I don't know if it was because of Sakurako-san, but I felt like a new door had opened up for me.

It was that kind of Sunday.

# Chapter 18 What a terrible start to the day!

It was Monday morning, the day after Kaede's mother opened a new door for me.

The time was now 7:50 am and the place was the classroom of class 1, year 4.

I was faced with a big problem.

As soon as I walked into the classroom, I was met with stares of interest, jealousy, and hatred, my heart had already been racing even before that.

“Good morning, Yuya. How does it feel to be the star of today's show?”

As soon as I got to my seat, my best friend Higure Shinji called out to me.



かたかわ:キャラデザ紹介

## ・日暮 伸二

勇也君の親友であり、サッカー部の相棒でもある。

恋人の大槻秋穂とはバカップルとして校内でも有名。

犬系男子。

勇也君の無自覚な惚気の最大の被害者。

彼の特徴である人懐っこい笑顔と照れた顔がイメージ通りです！

Shinji was on the same soccer team as me and my best friend on the pitch. At 165 centimeters tall, he was a bit small for a soccer player, but the creative passes he made with his feet were just perfect for me.

His soft and cute appearance, combined with his friendly personality, made him popular with girls as a dog boy, and when he first entered high school, he was approached by many girls, both classmates and seniors, but he turned them all down. This was because there was a girl, he fell in love with at first sight, and was already in a relationship with her.

“Good morning, Shinji. Well, if I had to describe my situation in one word, it would be ‘h\*\*l’.”

“Well, it can’t be helped. What else did you expect, coming to the school arm in arm with that Hitotsuba Kaede. Shouldn’t you have prepared yourself for such a situation to happen?”

“... Shut up. I’ve said it many times. I told her it would be pretty bad to do this. But Kaede didn’t listen to me. If I didn’t give in, she would have started to cry...”

Oh no. I was unconsciously remembering the agony I went through when I left home, and I said it out loud. My blood began draining from my face.

“Ah, I see. You really should have expected that, Yuya.”

Shinji’s dumbfounded voice pierced me. The only saving grace was that everyone was interested but hesitant to listen. This would get me through without any further questioning until the morning assembly chime. Just when I thought that...

“Hey, hey, Yoshi! Is it true that you and Kaede-chan have started going out!?”

The appearance of another person ruined my peace of mind and destroyed my hopes.

“... From whom did you hear that from, Otsuki-san?”

“Of course, it was Kaede-chan herself, right? After school last Friday, she said ‘I’m going to confess my feelings to Yoshizumi-kun’, but I hadn’t heard the result since then. But this morning’s commotion brought it back to my attention! Well, I’m sure you didn’t refuse Kaede-chan’s confession!”

The girl who looked like a ball of energy while laughing was Kaede’s classmate, Otsuki Akiho. She was a small girl with a bobbed haircut making her look like a legal loli. But despite her size, her b\*\*\*\*\*s might be as big as Kaede’s, if not even bigger.

“Akiho. It’s almost time for homeroom to start, you know. You shouldn’t be in our class now. Hurry up and go back.”

“Bwah... Shin-kun’s a jerk. Don’t you want to be with me, Shin-kun? Don’t you?”

“Ah, come on. Of course, I want to be with you. But if you don’t go back, the teacher will get mad at you.”

I sighed at the sudden pink exchange between Shinji and Otsuki-san, with more heart marks than usual. Yes, the person Shinji fell in love with at first sight was this Otsuki Akiho, and she also fell in love with Shinji at first sight. Now they were a famous silly couple when they were together.

“If you’re going to do it, do it somewhere else, you stupid couple. I can’t stand the sight of you both in the morning.”

“I can’t hear you! I don’t want this to be told by some couple who just came to school this morning happily arm-in-arm!”

“That’s right, Yuya. You talk about yourself like you’re different, but you’re the most delightful person I’ve ever seen, okay? You’re more of a couple than we are.”

Shinji and Otsuki-san have declared Kaede and me to be a couple! No, that’s not possible. I wasn’t delightful at all and ignored them.

“– For all your talk of getting away from me back then, you didn’t actually



want to peel me off, did you?”

I was embarrassed to admit, but more than that, I was smelling Kaede’s scent. This made me remember how soft and heavenly her body had been when we had linked arm in arm. Yes, I didn’t really want to peel her off.

“If this is what you really think... then please say it earlier. I’m ready to give it all up for you, Yuya-kun. If you want, you can enjoy my body tonight?”

“... Kaede. You can’t say such a thing in school. And I won’t even enjoy it, will I? I mean, what are you saying... in the morning...?”

I was absentmindedly resting on my elbow when suddenly I heard a voice behind me. I wanted to respond appropriately, but halfway through I realized that it was the lustrous, devilish voice I’d been hearing for the past two days, and when I turned around fearfully, I saw Kaede standing there. No way! Why are you here, Kaede!

“I just came to see you because I felt lonely thinking that I won’t be able see my beloved boyfriend until noon, you know? Is that bad?”

“Okay, let’s calm down a bit. I’m not your boyfriend because I haven’t responded to your confession yet. And I don’t enjoy being teased either. I prefer shy women. I’d rather not be tempted by someone who is so open about it. If you understand, come back later.”

“... I understand. If you say so much, then please be prepared for tonight then, okay? I’m going to go back to the classroom because HR is about to start, Akiho-chan.”

Turning on her heel, Kaede went back to her class with Otsuki-san. Oh dear. Just getting to school was so intense, at least she didn’t come all the way to the classroom to declare war.

“... Hey, Yuya. Can I ask you one question?”

“What is it, Shinji? Just say it.”

“No, I know it’s surely impossible, but I’m really curious about that... Do

you, Yuya and Hitotsuba-san live together?”

I remembered our earlier conversation and plopped down with a thud, hitting my head on the desk. Anyone who listened to that conversation would have thought of that possibility! How stupid of me!

“Yeah... I get it. I’m sure there’s something going on, so for now, I just feel... sorry for your troubles.”

The words of sympathy that my best friend uttered in a dumbfounded voice shattered my heart into a million pieces.

How terrible this day starts! I shouted as hard as possible in my mind.

# Chapter 19 You're right, Shinji!

As soon as the lunch break started, I wanted to run out of the classroom like a rabbit. I was sure that at the club activity after school, the other club members would connect this morning's incident with my absence on the weekend pursuing me for this and that, but until then, I wanted to stay as low as possible. And yet...

“Where are you going, Yuya-kun? We promised to have lunch together, didn't we? I went to a lot of trouble to make you a lunch box, but you won't eat it ...?”

Yes. I was captured by Kaede. The smirk on Otsuki-san's face made me salty. You've got to be kidding me, you little b\*tch. I want my peace back.

“I made this Hamburg steak (Footnote: It's not the meat on a hamburger; it's the Japanese version of a Salisbury steak, simmered in a sauce.) yesterday. Yuya-kun said it was delicious, and wished he could have it for lunch, so I got up early to make it.”

Yes. Kaede cooked dinner for us last night as she had announced. The meat juices that poured out of the pan showed that the meat was just as good as the ones you would get at a restaurant. The beefy flavor of the meat and the sweetness of the pork fat were there, and it was soft, tender and very tasty.

“And ... I've always wanted to try eating lunch with someone I love, can I?”

“... Of course, you can.”

How could I say no to someone with lowered eyelashes and an anxious look on their face? And god, the stares of these people around me!

“Hitotsuba’s homemade bento! I feel like dying from envy!”

“Is he going to turn down her invitation for lunch!? Why should he refuse!? I’ll kill him if he does!”

“Hey, did she say she made it last night? No way, could it be they’re living together!? What kind of romance development is that? No, isn’t that like development in eroges?”

The men’s hate-filled stares and murderous whispers pierced through my body. Only one guy said it was like an 18+ game, but that’s out of line for his age. Well, I do agree that it’s a novelistic development, though.

Incidentally, the girls said:

“How noble of you, Hitotsuba-san... I wish I could meet someone like such qualities soon.”

“I’m jealous that she can cook so well, and that she makes bentos for the people she loves... I should try cooking too.”

“I’ve heard that there are a lot of people who are interested in Yoshizumi-kun, the ace of the soccer team, but he has no chance against Kazuha-san. Like Higure-kun, the early bird gets the worm.”

All right. Let’s pretend I didn’t hear anything. Why? Because Kaede, who had moved next to me quickly, was emanating with a silent pressure. If I were to say ‘I’m actually quite popular?’, It was easy to imagine what would happen next.

“You only need to look at me, Yuya-kun. I will only look at you too.”

I resented the fact that I had a personality where my thoughts would easily show up on my face. I didn’t even have to say it out loud, she beat me to it. She also gave me a big smile while crossing her arms tightly. And while I was stunned, the classroom echoed with the gnashing of teeth of the men and the squeals of the girls.

“Oh Yuya... I’m sorry to interrupt your flirting, but if you don’t hurry up, we

won't have time to eat lunch. What do you want to do? Do you want to go to the cafeteria? Or eat here?"

Hey, Shinji. Who's flirting with whom? Doesn't it just look like I'm only being teased right now?

"I don't see that. In fact, it makes me a little embarrassed to see that you're flirting like this."

"Oh, don't say that, Shin-kun. I also want to flirt with you like I always have. Can't we?"

"Of course, we can. I love to flirt with you too, Akiho."

Shinji! You're creating an atmosphere where I can almost hear the song 'I knew I loved you the moment our eyes met'! Look, Kaede is staring at me enviously! Please, give me a break.

"Hey, Yuya-kun. We should be more lovey-dovey too –"

"Alright! We don't have much time, so let's eat! Put up the desks, Shinji! Two isn't enough, so we'll just stick them together! Those two are in the cafeteria, so they'll be fine!"

I'm not letting you tell me what to do. Her relatively modest assertiveness tugged at my flank, but I won't let my guard down this time! Also, you can't just puff up like a blowfish. I poked her in the cheek, causing her to puff out the air. Oh, how adorable is this girl's little mouth?

"Hey, Akiho. Should I comment on this? It's a loss for us, right?"

"Hmmm... It would be interesting to leave it like this, but it might be better not to, because the air in the classroom would turn very uncomfortable then. Shin-kun, you handle this!"

"Me, I have to stop it? No, that's impossible! Look at them, Akiho, look at those two! Yuya is smiling like I've never seen him smile before, and Hitotsuba-san's cheeks are so relaxed that it's obvious she doesn't want it to stop! There's no way I could ever stop that..."

What's with Shinji and Otsuki-san being so annoying? I'm just enjoying Kaede's cheeks, which are as soft as rice cakes. Hmm? Wait, enjoy?

“Um..., Yuya-kun. It's time for you to stop. ... It's too much. ...”

When I came to my senses, Kaede, whose cheek I was touching, was red-faced and pouting in protest. What had I done? I panicked and pulled my hand away.

“Huh. This is the first time Yuya-kun has ever had skinship with me like this. Let's be more intimate from now on ≡.”

I'd like to think it was just my imagination that I saw a heart mark at the end of the word.

“Yuya. I think you should pull yourself together a little.”

Yes, you're right, Shinji.

## Chapter 20 It'll be useful someday!

“Wow... that Hamburg steak (Footnote: It's not the meat on a hamburger; it's the Japanese version of a Salisbury steak, simmered in a sauce.) looks really good! Is this food cooked by Kaede-chan? It looks like something you'd be served at a restaurant!”

“Thank you, Akiho-chan. Would you like to try some?”

“Really? Yay!”

‘Oh my god, it's so good!’ I'm not sure what to say about Ootsuki-san eating Kaede's homemade Hamburg steak with a twinkle in her eye, but she seems kind of cute like a mascot. Or rather, Kaede and Otsuki's interaction resembles that of two close sisters.

“Hey, Yuya. I agree with you. Hitotsuba-san and Akiho are really like sisters, aren't they? If that's the case, do I have to call you my brother-in-law?”

“I don't want to be called brother-in-law by you, Shinji.”

Why does Shinji know what I'm thinking? Does it show on my face that much? If that's the case, I'm in a lot of trouble on the pitch, my opponent would be able to clearly observe my aim and the timing of my jumps.

“No, that's okay in soccer. Yuya is a different person when he's playing soccer. Whether it's in physical education or in club activities. He's usually a cat sitting idly by the window, but only when he's playing soccer, he becomes more like... like a tiger? Or like ‘Give me the ball or I'll kill you!’?”

Am I really that much of a selfish striker? Also, I don't have a special shot like the tiger shot. By the way, It's an amazingly good Hamburg steak.

"I guess Yuya's a moderate egoist. It's not that I can't see what's going on around me, but Yuya's senses when playing are crazy... so it's hard for me to keep up with him. The hurdle in playing with him is set way too high. Hey, can I have a bite of the steak too?"

Is that a compliment or an insult? And I don't really want to give it to you because Kaede's Hamburg steak is excellent, but I'll let you taste this amazingness too. Since you're my best friend, I'll give you a quarter of the special meal. Taste it and savor it.

"Hey, Kaede-chan. Yoshi-kun and Shin-kun are like brothers, aren't they? I mean, don't you think they're too close?"

"That's right. Normally men don't do that. Also, I think it's strange that he is feeding Higure-kun when he hasn't done that to me yet!"

"That's right, Yoshi! Shin-kun is mine, so you can't kiss him! Shin-kun, don't look so happy when doing that! It only makes the other girls around us happy!"

Kaede was getting closer with a disgruntled look on her face and Otsuki-san was grabbing Shinji's chest with an annoyed face while he was trying to eat the steak from my hand. To avoid complicating the matters, I just threw it in his mouth and there was nothing s\*\*y about it.

"Listen, Yuya-kun. You need to pull yourself together a little. If a puppy boy like Higure-kun and you, Yuya-kun, are flirting, everyone will misunderstand. On the contrary, they'll be even clamoring for you both to do more. So please refrain from such thoughtless behavior."

"Oh... yeah. I understand. I'll be careful from now on. I'm not going to do any weird things. But you know what, Kaede? You don't sound really convincing by taking a video of us with your phone, right? I'm also afraid of your panting, you know?"



If you're complaining about it while sniffing and excitedly saying 'Hah, hah, hah' at the same time, then anybody will be terrified. Look at it, even Otsuki-san is slightly taken back.

"... I don't feel guilty. I just thought it would be useful to keep a record of Yuya-kun and Higure-kun's friendship for the future. So I have no malicious intentions, nor do I have any guilty feelings."

Well, isn't that amazing? I can't really say anything back to her. When said like that, even I would think that she was only taking pictures as a memorable scene for the future, when in fact she was taking pictures for her personal enjoyment.

"Hey, hey, Kaede-chan. What do you mean, it will be useful someday? Do you mean like for a reunion?"

Otsuki-san asked a simple question. It's true, you might never know whether this video could come in handy in the future. Shinji also nodded his head as if he wanted to ask the same question. Yeah, you're right. I would also think that if I were in the same position.

"Someday...? Oh yes, of course someday. Isn't that decided?"

"Of course, it's for a school reunion! There can be no other reason! And then it will turn out, the two of you both were already married with each other! And that can be used as an excuse to make fun of Yoshi-kun and Shin-kun! Isn't that right, Kaede-chan?"

I can't let them say anything more! I've been in a lot of trouble because of rumors that we're dating, and now you're talking about a wedding. My peace of mind will be shattered.

"No, Yuya-kun. This is a wonderful thing –"

"Is – that – so, Kaede?"

I'm not gonna let you say it! I physically covered her mouth with my hand and pressured her with my most intimidating grimace. Kaede nodded her

head with a blush on her cheeks. Phew, that's a relief.

"Hey, Shin. Yoshi looks like he was successful, but do you think he was really able to cover it up?"

"Akiho. Sometimes, even if you think of something, you shouldn't say it out loud. If the two of them think they're just fooling around, that's fine. We'll keep our mouths shut."

I can hear you, you two!

"... Hey. Please don't suddenly cover my mouth. You startled me."

"I think it's Kaede's fault for trying to say something out of the blue, don't you regret that?"

"It's true that I was... a little too rash. However, Yuya-kun. If you were going to cover my mouth, you could have done it with your mouth instead of your hands, you know? In fact, I would have preferred you had done that with a... kiss."

Kaede... What a mouthful you are! You would have otherwise said the photo was for the wedding! Well, if I hadn't stopped you, people would have just thought that you were getting ahead of herself in the typical high school way. You know how sometimes you see people on social media and they shamelessly post a picture with a heart mark that says, 'We'll always be together'. That's how it could have ended.

"But if we're going to do this, I'd rather do it at ..... on a private night, before we go to bed."

"Okay, shut up for a minute. I mean, please be quiet. Please. I'll do anything."

"Yes. If Yuya-kun will do anything for me, I will be quiet."

Kaede said with a big smile on her face, and then stopped talking. I was left alone and at a loss. What, did I just say that I have to do what Kaede wants? Oh no...

“Hey, hey, Shin-kun. Maybe we were seen that way too? “

“That’s right, Akiho. Let’s be a little quiet in front of everyone.”

What was supposed to be a fun, relaxing lunch break turned out to be more of a storm for me.

# Chapter 21 Kaede's Cheering is the Best in Japan!

“Run, run, run! Keep running until you fall down!”

“Catch up with the ball! Why did you give up, Yoshizumi!”

“You and Higure, go explode, you b\*\*\*\*\*s!”

After school. For some reason, the soccer team was really into their practice. Today we were playing a rarely played game of red and white, and I was in the red team. And... the way they were treating me, ally or foe, was incredibly bad. Hey, who said the last sentence? At least make an effort to hide your personal grudge.

“Haa... haa... damn. I think the seniors are getting too worked up.”

As I put my hand on the goal post, I tried to catch my breath. What the h\*\*l was that pass? It was a good idea to set up a quick counterattack, but that single long pass from the defense line was just unbelievable. The ball flew too fast and the accuracy was way too low, so the total accuracy of that pass was just bad. There was no way I could keep up with the ball, and thanks to that I was forced to run for nothing.

“Well, the cause is definitely... Heck, why are you watching, Kaede?”

Yes. The source of the seniors' sudden motivation was Kaede, who was looking out the classroom window at the ground with a grand smile. Ah, our eyes met. Don't wave your hand. I'm a little happy about it, but the way the seniors are looking at me seems to be emanating with bloodthirst.

“Yuya-kun, fight!”

Can you please also wave to them? If I’m the only one being cheered on personally, that will be like pouring gasoline on the fighting spirit of the seniors who weren’t cheered on, and they’ll just treat me worse and worse.

“It must not be easy being loved by the cutest girlfriend in Japan, Yuya.”

“Shut up, Shinji. And I’m telling you, she’s not my girlfriend yet.”

“You’re saying she’s not yet, which means she will be sooner or later, right? You’re pointlessly stubborn in a weird way, Yuya. Just be honest and get on with it.”

As I was returning to my intended position, my partner Shinji, also from the red team, called out to me carefreely. No, why are you here? Shouldn’t you be playing in the defense position? Not that I could tell.

“I’m fine. The seniors are working very hard to show Hitotsuba-san how good they are, so they can defend without me or Yuya.”

“I’m sure it must also be the case for the white team that’s attacking us. What a mess. If they were as motivated as this on a regular basis, we could win the Tokyo tournament.”

Our soccer team is normally not very motivated. But it’s not that our individual abilities were low, so if we have a prodigious passer like Shinji, even a mere striker like me can score. Now we just need to mature our defense and we might have a chance in winning.

“If Yuya goes out with Hitotsuba-san and gets her to be the manager of the soccer team, we can probably win the national championship.”

“Hahaha. The joke is on you. If Kaede becomes the manager, I won’t be able to relax. That’s it, let’s stop wasting time talking and go score some points.”

I pointed my fist at my partner while brushing up my bangs with my other hand, which were damp and sweaty from running around in the winter. Shinji whistled and then bumped his fist at mine.

“That’s right; let’s show Hitotsuba-san how cool Yuya is around here. Leave it to me, I’ll make you look good!”

“Haha. It’s not like I’m trying to show off to Kaede, who has been cheering for me loudly for a while now! I’m just trying to win the red and white game!”

“Yes, yes. You tsundere. Pfft, Yuya’s so cute when you’re like that.”

Shinji starts running while laughing. What do you mean by that? There’s no way I’m a tsundere!

“Yuya-kun—! Go for it—!”

Don’t shout your cheers out of the window! And why are you cheering today? Haven’t you normally been watching quietly so as not to be noticed so far?

“But ... It doesn’t feel bad to be supported.”

It is said that cheering can make you go all out. Well then, I guess I’ll just listen to Kaede’s voice today and go as far as I can go!

After that, I scored with those exquisite passes from Shinji, and the red-and-white game ended in a 3-0 victory for the red team. All those goals were scored by me and I ended up getting a hattrick (Footnote: The achievement of scoring three goals in a row by the same player.). However, my seniors didn’t praise me and rather looked at me with jealousy. I don’t understand.

“Yuuuyaaa-kun, you’re so coooool!”

I see. I guess it’s because Kaede is getting excited with all her might. But Kaede, aren’t you breaking character? Was she ever so highly enthusiastic? Weren’t you used to watching my detention practice quietly in the past?

“You’re so loved, Yuya.”

“Shut up, Shinji.”

For once, the smile on Shinji's face, one half of smirking at a couple and the other at his best buddy, annoyed me a lot.

# Chapter 22 Kaede Wants to Hold Hands

My body was tired because I had put in more effort than usual in the red and white game, but I still did not miss my daily shooting practice.

The world's best forwards, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, were strikers and also great specialists. That's why I always stay alone after club activities and keep kicking the ball every day.

Exhausted to the point of not wanting to do anything for the first time in a long time, I was just leaving the school gate to go home when someone tapped on the shoulder. When I turned around, I found a beautiful finger like a cool white beam poking my cheek. Kaede's face was full of joy.

"Great job, Yuya. You were very cool again today."

Her breath was white, but her cheeks were flushed, and her voice laced with excitement. I wonder if the excitement of the red and white game had yet to cool down. Was she waiting in the cold weather? Her hands might be getting cold.

"I might be late making dinner, but I really wanted to come home with Yuyakun. Was that a bad idea?"

"...Okay, not really. But you didn't have to wait outside, did you? You could have waited for me in the classroom. You could have sent me a message and I would have come and picked you up..."

I wrapped my hands gently around Kaede's hand in disbelief. I felt guilty for



making the girl wait alone on a February night when spring is still far away, and as a way to at least make amends, I gave her hands some warmth.

“Oh, um.... Yuya-kun, is, is that you? So suddenly, what’s going on...?”

“Shut up. You’re so cold. It’s your punishment for forcing yourself to wait for me outside in the cold.”

That’s right. Even if it is in front of the school gate, it is still dangerous for a beautiful girl like Kaede to be waiting alone at night. And even if she has a coat on, she’s still wearing a skirt and it’s bound to be cold if you stay still. What if she catches a cold?

Kaede groaned as she slumped over, but her protests went unheeded. I won’t let go of this hand until it reaches the normal temperature.

“If... If I catch a cold. Then... will Yuya-kun take care of me?”

“Of course, I will. If Kaede caught a cold because of me, I would have to take responsibility for it. But if at all possible, I’d prefer you won’t catch a cold.”

Yes, I would be worried. If I left Kaede alone at school while she was sick in bed, I wouldn’t be able to concentrate on class or even club activities because I would be worried about what she was doing at home.

“Here. Use this. Let’s go home early and have a hot meal today. Let’s stop by the supermarket, buy some vegetables and meat, and have a hot pot. Then, tomorrow we’ll have the rest of it and rice porridge. What do you think?”

As we talked about the menu for dinner, I took off my own gloves and handed them to her. I could feel the cold air stinging my skin and the loss of feeling on my fingertips. I sheltered my hands in my coat, but it didn’t really make any difference. I couldn’t wait to get home and soak in a warm bath.

“Wait a minute, Yuya-kun! It’s nice of you to lend me your gloves, but this is not going to help your hands!”

“I’ll be fine. I can use my pockets and it won’t be a problem. Let’s go home sooner before we have to talk about it. I don’t want to skip dinner, okay?”

“Hmm... fine. Then let's do this.”

Kaede quickly grabbed my hand and shoved it straight into her coat pocket. Her fingers intertwined with mine in a so-called lover's connection. Her cheeks were changing color like autumn leaves. Of course, not only Kaede, but me as well.

“This way, Yuya's hands won't get cold, right? I think it's good that others can't see us from the outside that we're holding hands, what do you think?”



‘What do you think?’ Don’t stare at me with sparkling eyes! I feel like I’m about to overheat just by holding your hand, and now you want to put our hands in your coat pocket? You can’t see it from the outside, but it’s obvious that we’re holding hands, and I think it rather shows off how close we are!

“... It was Yuya-kun who was holding my hand until just a moment ago. You can’t convince me that you’re panicking now, can you?”

“That’s true, but... indeed, this is a bit... embarrassing, or rather...”

“Or is it that you hate holding hands with me, Yuya? Do you have a problem with someone seeing us?”

If you were to ask me if I didn’t like it, I wouldn’t actually mind. The only way to intertwine your fingers and hold hands like this was if you’re lovers, and if it’s Kaede, you should be crying for joy. Heh, it’s funny. I feel like I’m already smitten by the bond with her.

“Come on, we have to go, or the supermarket will be closed. Let’s hurry up!”

I kept pace with Kaede as she started to run off.

In the cold weather. We arrived home, feeling the warmth of each other’s hands.

## Chapter 23 Yuya with the tease

“Wenyu pullujap myumbensh, nyuwe sukool!” [TN: (Guess) When you pulled up your bangs, you were so cool!]

Kaede’s mouth was squirming up as she uttered some incomprehensible words. You want me to translate? Don’t be absurd. I don’t understand it either.

“It’s fine to talk, but at least swallow what’s in your mouth before you do it. I don’t understand what you’re talking about.”

We left the school, hand in hand to the supermarket in order to buy ingredients for a hot pot. We finished cooking quickly and were now having a slightly late supper.

Kaede insisted on kimchi hot pot. So, I sauteed minced garlic and ginger in sesame oil and then threw in the nabe ingredients I had bought. This step always added flavor to the dish, making it more delicious.

Since it was late, they were out of Chinese cabbage, one of the main ingredients, but I had bought kimchi instead and threw it in. The result was great since it was cheap, and the kimchi added a rich flavor. After that, I added bean sprouts, mushrooms, tofu, pork, and finished cooking. The dish was easy to make and fills you up. In addition, it was quite a healthy dish because of the nutrition from the vegetables, which were often lacking when boiled. That was what hot pot was all about.

“Haaaaa. Mmmh... hot pot is good after all. It warms me up. But I’m sorry, Yuya-kun. You must be tired, yet you still prepared it for me. I’ll take care of

the cleanup, so please take a good night's rest."

"Don't worry about it, it's not as hard as it sounds. Anyway, what were you saying while you were eating? I have no idea."

"That's right! When Yuya-kun pulled up his bangs, it was so cool and awesome! It made me swoon!"

Kaede looked up to the sky while placing her hands on her chest. I just watched her with a blank stare. What is it about the way I brush up my bangs that makes her feel swooned? I didn't understand what Kaede's point was.

"No! This is not just my weakness. It's probably a common weakness for all women. When a boy who is working hard says 'Well, I guess I'll get serious now' and brushes his hair, that's just the best! And if he goes on to play a major role in the game, you'll easily fall in love with him! You'd be crazy not to!"

"Ah... yes. I see..."

Do you really know what you're doing? She stared at me with a fierce glare, but to be honest, I really don't understand at this point. It is true that the reason why I brushed my bangs up was to turn on the switch in my mind, but I guess that is what made me become cynical. I mean, Kaede, it's amazing that you can observe the detailed movements of mine so well and even understand the state of my mind.

"Huh. It's natural, isn't it? I've been watching Yuya-kun play soccer for a long time, you know. I know the moment you get serious."

"... Is that how it is?"

"That's the way it is. And don't you want to understand the person you love? I want to know more about you, Yuya-kun. I'd be happy if you felt the same way."

I understand. I know that my feelings are already inexplicably directed towards Kaede. Just within only three days. But still three days. The time I've

spent with Kaede has allowed me to see more and more aspects of her that I didn't know existed. The more I come to know her, the more I become captivated by her charms.

"Yes... I want to know more about Kaede, too. I think so."

"Well then! Today is the day we bathe together! The best way to get to know each other is to get naked together! I'll wash your back, Yuya-kun!"

Why does this girl want to take a bath with me at any given possibility? Could it be that she has a habit of exposing herself or something? As a man, I would have been delighted to see her, but that was still too stimulating. I should firmly refuse. No, wait. I'll just go along with it and see how she reacts.

"... Oh, I agree. The quickest way to get to know each other is to get naked. Okay, let's take a bath together after this. You're going to wash my back, right?"

How about that, Kaede!

"Ehh!? You're serious, Yuya-kun!? You're really going to take a bath with me!?"

Thank you for your panicked reaction along with your face as red as an apple. If you're embarrassed, don't force yourself to say it. But Kaede's petite panic as she flapped her hands in front of her face was so cute, so I decided to watch her without immediately telling her I was joking.

Later, when I told her that I was joking, she puffed out her mouth and angrily said, 'Don't make fun of me!' But I'm happy to report that it was also a lovely experience.

# Chapter 24 Speaking of February Events!

If you were to ask me what I consider as the biggest event in February, I would say only one thing. Yes, Valentine's Day. It's a big event with all sorts of conspiracies made by chocolate and candy makers, and a day of bloodshed for men who don't receive any.

It was lunchtime in the middle of the week, the third day since I started going to school with Kaede. The four of us were having lunch in the classroom with Shinji and Otsuki-san, which had already become a daily routine.

As usual, since rumors somewhat lasted around 75 days, I could feel the buzz and the stares of curiosity and jealousy lingering around me. But this time, it seemed that I was not the only one who realized this.

"It seems that there are really fans of Yuya-kun after all. There are several female students who are looking at you..."

"You're not just imagining things, are you? I'm a rather unremarkable person, you know?"

I'm just a soccer player covered in sweat and mud. Since I'm always hanging out with Shinji in class, I'm far away from the rest of the rowdy group of girls. The only girl I know is Otsuki-san and even that was through Shinji. How could I ever be popular? You're kidding, right?

"Seriously.... this is why Yuya-kun... you should be more aware of your own attractiveness. Listen. How you are, Yuya-kun, is very wonderful. The



way you are so dedicated to one thing, the way you work so hard, the way you never give up. The casual kindness that you sometimes show. Rather than a good face or something like that, Yuya-kun, your inner self is very charming. Please realize that there are many women who are attracted to that.”

“Yes, yes... I understand.”

She gave me a powerful lecture while pointing her finger at me. I wonder if that’s how things really were. But since Kaede says so, I’m sure she’s right. Still, I was quite embarrassed to hear her say it. I couldn’t help but look away.

“Mouu. Why are you looking away? I’m trying to tell you something important. Please look me in the eye.”

Don’t grab my head and move it and don’t try to force me to look you in the eye! I struggled to resist, struggling against my neck, but Kaede became more and more defiant, her cheeks puffed out as she tried to move my head. Help me, Shinjimon (Footnote: Not sure, but probably a reference to Pokémon or Digimon.)!

“Hey, Shin-kun. Why don’t you stop her? Yoshi’s quite in trouble, right?”

“Yes, but this is quite funny, so I’ll leave it be. Don’t you want to see how Hitotsuba-san reacts when she comes back to herself, Akiho?”

“Yeah... I might want to see that. Kaede-chan, I don’t know if you’re bold or dumb. It’s amazing how natural she is.”

Hey, you stupid couple! Don’t just stand and watch from the sidelines! Sure, I’d like to see Kaede’s face turn red when she comes back to herself, but now is not the time to look forward to such things!

“Don’t... resist, please...! Or can’t you look me in the eye and talk to me, Yuya? Don’t you want to ..... talk to me?”

“That’s not true! It’s just that, you know, Kaede. Can you please stop

clenching my face? What else should I say? It's ..... embarrassing."

As Kaede made a sound like she was about to cry, I reflexively looked her in the eyes and denied it. This action was a surprise to her, and although she was probably too absorbed to realize it, there was hardly any distance between us and her face.

"Oh... well, this is... well... well..."

"It's not that I don't like to make eye contact with you or anything, it's just that I was embarrassed that you suddenly said I was nice and everything. Please don't misunderstand me."

"Yes... yes... I understand..."

Hey, Shinji. You're muttering about the birth of the second couple, but I can hear you just fine, okay? We're still not together, okay?

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yoshi, leave it at that. Hey, hey, Kaede-chan! Kaede-chan, have you thought about what you're going to do for Valentine's Day next week?"

"Of course. I'm planning to make a chocolate cake for Yuya-kun to eat over the weekend."

It was actually last night that we talked about this. It was coming up the following week, and Kaede asked me what I would like. I casually mumbled something about a cake, and that's how it came about. But, is cake even something easy to make?

"Waow.... I can't make a cake", Otsuki-san said. "That's amazing, Kaede-chan!"

"No, no. I just want to make his wish come true since he said he wanted to eat it. It's my first time too, so I am worried that I might fail..."

I told Kaede that she didn't have to force herself to make the cake, but Kaede refused to budge, saying that everything was a challenge. Since that was the case, all I could do was to eat the cake she made. That would be my way of

rewarding Kaede for her hard work.

“Yuya, you’re so loved.”

Shut up. It kind of pisses me off when you say that. Are you what people call being a veteran who already has a girlfriend? Or are you just being sarcastic about my ongoing history of not having a girlfriend?

“Yes! How about we make chocolates together at Kaede’s house this weekend? We won’t be making obligatory nor friend chocolates anyway, so wouldn’t it be better to have them eat it the same day we make it!”

Hey, I don’t think so! Otsuki-san, don’t say such a thing! If you’re going to Kaede’s house to make chocolates, that means you’re going to find out that I’m living with her! I really hope that Kaede is aware of this, but I can’t be so sure.

So, I made eye contact with Kaede.

‘You know what to do, don’t you, Kaede? You’re going to say no, right?’

‘I understand, Yuya-kun. Please leave it to me.’

‘Phew. That’s a relief.’

“I like that idea. Let’s make it together!”

“Wow! That’s Kaede-chan for you! She understands me a lot!”

Oh, hey! Why did you do that! This is the part where you’re supposed to say no! Just why are you giving me a thumbs-up with a face like you did a good job! No, you’re totally wrong, Kaede!

“If that’s the case, can I go to Hitotsuba-san’s house too? Maybe we can all... have dinner together that night?”

“That’s right. I’ll make chocolates while Yuya-kun and the others are away for club activities, prepare dinner and wait for them. Please let me know if you have any requests.”

“Yes! Yes! I want a Hamburg steak again! I want to eat Kaede-chan’s homemade Hamburg steak!”

“Okay. I understand.”

The conversation went on and on, leaving no room for me to interrupt. It’s all over now. They will soon find out that we live together.

“I’m looking forward to it, Yuya.”

“...Yeah, I guess so.”

My best friend’s confident smile was so incredibly annoying.

## Chapter 25 Only those prepared to be nervous can make others nervous

It was Sunday, the weekend. Otsuki-san was coming to our house to make chocolates for Valentine's Day with Kaede. I wanted to leave the house early because I had a full day of soccer practice in the morning.

"Here you go, Yuya-kun. Here is your lunch box made by your beloved wife."

"I won't comment about the job change from lover to wife because I don't have time for that, but eh, did you make me lunch again today?"

To my surprise, Kaede had prepared my lunch. Out of the five days I went to school, I ate Kaede's homemade lunch three times. In addition, she has been cooking for us at night as well, albeit in shifts, so she already knew my tastes. Her food was also delicious. The way she arranged the food on the table was not so attractive, though.

"I made it with only a few things. I packed up the leftover gingerbread and stir-fried vegetables from yesterday. The rice was cooked this morning, so it should still taste good. Good luck with your club activities, okay?"

"Oh, yeah, I'm leaving... and will try my best."

"Huh. But at least for today, I want you to come home with Higure-kun instead of practicing in solitude. I want you – to eat – my food."

Kaede smiled seductively as she said this and wrote the character for "no" near my heart with her finger. What's going on with you? Isn't that too much

stimulation in the morning, Kaede? Even though it was the middle of winter, my body temperature was rising rapidly. My heart was beating fast. My instincts whispered something devilish, but I resisted my temptations.

“If it were possible, I would demand a good-bye kiss, but – I’ll hold back. I’ll wait for the day when you do.”

That must have been deliberate. She must be doing it on purpose to make me feel nervous and annoyed. But I’m aware of the truth. I can see that Kaede is pushing herself a little too hard. That’s because her cheeks are a little flushed! It’s a sign that she was embarrassed, even though she said otherwise. This is the time to fight back. I’m not letting myself get beaten up every time!

“... Then, Kaede – I’m off. “

“Huh?”

I quickly shifted her bangs and dropped a kiss on her forehead while calling her Kaede. While she was dumbfounded by the sudden event, I said “I’m off” once more before leaving the house.

“Ah... ah, on my forehead...”

Through the gap in the closing door, I could see Kaede standing dumbfoundedly as she touched her forehead. Hehe Kaede, only those prepared to be nervous can make others nervous. While imagining myself acting as an evil emperor in my mind, I waited for the elevator.

“Kyaaaaaahhhh, Yyyuyyya-kun kissssssed meeeee —!”

Kaede’s joyful, scream-like cheer that echoed all the way to the entrance took me by surprise and made my shoulders shudder. Would a kiss on the forehead make you this happy? It’s not like it was mouth-to-mouth. Isn’t doing it on the forehead more like a greeting?

...

“A kiss on the forehead to say goodbye? Isn’t that more embarrassing than a normal kiss?”

Apparently, it wasn't normal at all. I asked Shinji, one half of the couple and also my partner on the pitch, what he thought about kissing on the forehead, and he gave me this answer.

"I think it's quite common for lovers and couples to kiss, and we do it too, but I don't think we'd kiss on the forehead. That would be too embarrassing."

"Huh? Why not? It's more embarrassing to kiss a person normally. A kiss on the forehead is like a greeting, isn't it?"

"This is... How typical of Yuya. Kissing is a normal thing for lovers. But you know, I don't kiss her forehead. Because people do it rarely. It's embarrassing to do something... you don't normally do. I really don't know why you think that's normal."

Really? My a\*\*hole dad used to give my mom a good-bye kiss on her forehead every morning. It always made her squeal with delight. I've never seen the two of them kiss normally before.

"That's not surprising, Yuya. I've never seen my own parents kissing, and I don't want to either. I don't know what happened to Hitotsuba-san who got a kiss on her forehead-"

"I'm sure it's nothing. She was screaming a bit, but she'll calm down soon. I'm sure she'll be fine by the time we get home."

It was always me getting nervous. I can't get even if I don't return a little thrill back. Kaede was too unaware of her attractiveness.

"Huh... Hey, Yuya. Can I ask you one question?"

"What's up, mate?"

"You're not going to deny that you kissed Hitotsuba-san's forehead on your way out? You guys are really living together, aren't you?"

Oh no... I actually revealed it beforehand.

## Chapter 26 Yuya-kun is a little off track

Kaede had asked me to come home early this morning. Without doing any extra practice, Shinji and I went home together.

Fortunately, our conversation was not overheard by anyone else. If the other members of the soccer team were to find out that I was living together with Kaede, I wondered what would happen for the rest of the weekend. The mere mention of being in a relationship was enough to make a big deal out of it and make them want to kill me, but if the matter of us living together was known, wouldn't I really get stabbed someday?

"You'd better be careful, Yuya. You're a bit on the naive side, so I'm sure you'll get into trouble soon. Living together means you're sleeping on the same bed, right?"

"Well, we are sleeping together, but we are also sleeping quite a distance apart, you know? So, there won't be any mistakes happening..."

"That's what I'm talking about. I was just asking if you slept together and you should have just lied that you slept separately. Why would you say anything else?"

Shinji. You're such a schemer, you know? It's not fair for you to take advantage of my honest heart and question me.

"No, I don't think you're being honest, I think Yuya's just being stupid, okay? Well, it's probably just a matter of time for you. Hitotsuba-san doesn't



seem to be trying to hide it either.”

In fact, that was sometimes the biggest problem. Kaede always comes to school with her arms linked with me as if proudly declaring that she is in a relationship with me, waits for me late until practice is over, and then leaves the school holding her lover’s hand. At lunchtime, she either comes to the classroom and eats homemade lunch together or eats in the cafeteria with me, so we were together every day. I don’t know what would happen if we even were to be in the same class.

“She’ll definitely become a full-fledged wife. I even wonder if Hitotsuba-san could ever be jealous?”

“Hey, don’t try to burn a hole in my stomach. I don’t know if she could be jealous... but I’m sure it’ll be cute if she were.”

Let’s imagine this. For example, what would happen if I did well in a physical education class and the girls cheered and waved at me with smiles on their faces? No, that wouldn’t be right. In Kaede’s case, she would cheer for me louder than anyone else.

Then, what if I were to talk to a girl other than Kaede? Kaede is the only girl I’ve been talking to lately, isn’t it? But other than her, the only other girl I’ve been talking to is Shinji’s girlfriend, Otsuki-san. Well, I think I’ve been talking to her a little more.

“Everyone is reserved, especially to you, the boyfriend of Hitotsuba-san. It was the same way for me at first too, you know? Everyone stopped talking to me just because I became Akiho’s boyfriend. Well, it has been normalized now, but in Yuya’s case, your partner is also another reason.”

A male student is dating a beautiful girl who was chosen as the grand prize winner of the National High School Girls Miss Contest. It’s hard enough to talk to a guy who has a girlfriend, but when that girl is Kaede, will all the girls shy away?

“But that’s okay. It’s fine as long as Kaede is there and you and Otsuki-san are there. I’d like to see Kaede jealous, but I don’t want to make her sad.”

Jealousy means making people feel uncomfortable. I owe a lot to Kaede and spending time with her has made my days more colorful. Well, that doesn't mean that I don't suffer from problems such as heart-throbbing and exhaustion from playing the straight man with her.

“It's a good thing that you can easily say that you don't want to make her sad. Don't you think Hitotsuba-san fell in love with you because she could relate with your way of thinking?”

I wonder if that's true. It is natural to think that you do not want to make your loved ones sad, isn't it? It doesn't matter if it's a lover, a friend, or a family member.

“Normally, that's something you think about but can't really say out loud. But Yuya is cool because he says it without hesitation. Well, it looks like you're going to have a hard time, Hitotsuba-san.”

Shinji was laughing and I couldn't help but feel uncomfortable, but just when I was just thinking about trying to say something back, Shinji suddenly changed the topic. What is it now?

“Hey, wait a minute, Yuya. I just brushed it off, but. What? You guys go to school every day while holding hands? What do you mean? I didn't hear anything about that.”

You take the story back a long time ago, don't you? There's no reason why I should bother to report to you that Kaede and I go home hand in hand, right?

“No, no, no! You're right, you're not obligated to report me or anything, but you're not dating Hitotsuba-san, are you? So why are you walking to school together as lovers?”

“Oh..., that. We went home holding hands once. I was so embarrassed, while Kaede was so happy. Since then, she started to sulk if I didn't hold her hand. Well, it was a bit of a random thing to say.”

On the way home that day, I was waiting alone in the cold weather for my practice to end. I warmed my cold hands and Kaede held my hand as we

walked home together, and for some reason, doing so has become the norm since that day.

“That doesn’t mean I’m proudly showing off our connection, okay? I’m putting my hands in my coat pockets and holding them there. It’s less conspicuous, right?”

I was embarrassed to walk with my arms crossed or to hold hands in a dignified manner. But if we held hands inside the coat, it wouldn’t be obvious at a glance. When I told her about my groundbreaking idea, Kaede somehow dyed her cheeks and shyly said, ‘If you’re okay with that, Yuya-kun...’. Why?

“Haha ..... holding your lover’s hand in your boyfriend’s coat pocket, huh? I think it seems more like a private world for the two of you, but I guess Yuya doesn’t understand. You just can’t beat the natural beauty of Hitotsubasan.”

I didn’t understand the meaning of Shinji’s sigh, and in the meantime, Shinji and I arrived at our destination. Well, from my point of view, we just went home.

“Wow, that’s amazing... So this is your love nest...”

“Don’t call it a love nest. Don’t be fooled, let’s go. I’ve been getting a lot of calls from Kaede asking if I’m going home yet.”

I pulled Shinji’s hand, who looked just as surprised as I was when I was first brought here, and we hurried to the waiting duo.

I wondered what kind of food they were going to serve. I was really looking forward to it. Shinji shivering in the elevator looks so cute, like a little deer. Well, I felt the same way when I first came here.

I unlocked the door and said “I’m home” as I was about to enter. Kaede was standing in the doorway in an apron and with a ladle in her hand.

“Welcome home, dear! Do you want to take a bath? Would you like to have

dinner? Or do – you – want – me?”

I was greeted by the newest, cutest wife in Japan with a huge smile.

## Chapter 27 I'm home

I came home only to find the cutest high school girl in Japan waiting for me dressed in an apron. I tried my best to retain a poker face, but I couldn't help myself from reacting to this. Because it really looked good on her.

Today, Kaede was wearing a beige trench skirt and a white sweatshirt. The overall loose-fitting outfit made her look even cuter, and the flowery apron she was wearing over it gave her a newly wedded wife look that I couldn't look at directly.

“What's the matter, dear? Do you want dinner? A bath? Or do you want... to have me?”

The situation was too much for my brain to process. For the time being, I pinched Shinji, who was holding back his laughter next to me, and looked back at Kaede, who was waiting for an answer with her neck stiffened and her eyes moistened.

“Then, in this case... you, Kaede.”

I decided on the option I thought would be the least likely to be chosen and dared to answer flat out plainly. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see Shinji holding his mouth stopping himself from letting out a gasp of surprise as I took off my shoes to stand in front of Kaede.



“Eh... what? M-me, Yuya-kun!?”

“You wanted me to pick you, right? Then I’ll have you... just as you wish, Kaede.”

I put my hand on her shoulder and whispered quietly, making Kaede’s face turn red as she started to fidget. The way her expression changed from one moment to the next was so funny and cute that I couldn’t help but smile. It was just frustrating to have kept losing to this teasing high school girl. That’s why I was going to get even with her!

“Yu- Yuya-kun —!? A-are you here – to kiss me!? Isn’t Higure-kun here too!? Are you listening to me!?”

“You’re too loud. Be quiet, Kaede.”

I slowly moved my face closer to hers. Kaede, who had been making like a hundred different expressions, squeezed her eyes shut as if she had made up her mind, and squeezed her lips together a little, quivering as if begging for it. Her action made my heart jump out of my chest. What a cute little fellow. The right hand that was resting on my shoulder naturally moved down to her waist as I hugged her and was just about to kiss her.

“Kaede — chan? What’s going on —? Eh, huh!?”

A lifesaver appeared to put a stop at my antics.

“Who!? AAHHHHHHH, AKIHO-CHAN!!?? There’s absolutely no kissing here, I’m not kissing him, you know!? Yuya-kun tried to kiss me, but we didn’t do it yet, you know!?”

With putting your hands around my body and your face so close to my chest, your meek excuses didn’t make sense nor convinced her at all though, Kaede.

Apparently, Otsuki-san was worried that we hadn’t come to the living room when we got home, so she had come to check on us. She didn’t think that I was about to kiss Kaede and was so surprised that she raised her voice. But I have to say it here. Thank you, Otsuki-san.

“Hey, hey, Shin-kun! The two of them kissed, right!? They kissed, right!? Did they!?”

“Wouldn’t it be more interesting to talk about that... over dinner, Akiho? I also would like to know why Yuya made such a bold move.”

Yeah, right! Otsuki-san agreed to his suggestion. But hey, Shinji! Don’t say unnecessary things! What the h\*\*l do you want me to say!? And don’t go to the living room without us, the owners of the house.

“I’m sorry, but I’ll wait in the living room first, and you can come after you have talked to Hitotsuba-san. Well, I understand that you want to hug the girl you like forever, but do it in moderation. You couple.”

“Oh, you —!”

With a devilish smile on his face, Shinji was led by Otsuki-san to the living room. Kaede and I were left in the doorway, still hugging each other as he pointed out from the side. It also didn’t help that my right hand was still latched around her waist.

“Oh... Kaede. Why don’t we go to them quickly? You’re done preparing dinner, right?”

“I don’t want... to...”

“You don’t want to? ... No way, why...”

“It’s Yuya-kun’s fault... for making me so nervous. I wanted to make Yuya-kun’s heart pound, but... it’s really not fair.”

Kaede put more strength into her arms around my body. I took my hands off her waist and raised them as a sign of surrendering.

“I’m sorry. I got carried away... I’d like to know what I can do to put you in a better mood.”

“... Kiss me. I’ll forgive you if you kiss me.”



I gulped down my saliva. My first kiss in this way? Is that okay? No, it's not okay! I haven't even confessed my feelings yet.

“Humph. Just kidding. You can kiss me another time. Instead, please ... hug me. Squeeze me tightly. Hug me with all your heart... that you won't give it to anyone else, Yuya-kun.”

I understand. I won't let you go, Kaede. If I could, I'd want you to be with me forever.

With this thought in mind, I hugged her gently, but forcefully.

Oh, God damn it. It's like we're completely in love. However, it's not the right order to hug her before telling her you love her. I'm also including the fact that it's funny that we're living together.

But still, how happy I am. I feel like I'm dreaming, even though I'm just hugging a soft body full of warmth. In addition, the sweet scent of chocolate mixed with the usual fresh scent of citrus released an indescribable freshness for me.

“Yuya-kun? Um... well, it's about time... and I'm so embarrassed...”

“Mmm... a little more... like this...”

“I suppose... it's inevitable.”

Kaede mumbled in a dumbfounded but gentle tone and pulled her body closer. This feeling, this comfort, this could turn into a habit. Oh, I want to do this forever...

“Hey, hey, Shin-kun. What the h\*\*l are we being shown?”

“Yes, that's right. To summarize, we're seeing a masterpiece describing the beauty of the embrace of two people deeply in love with each other. I'll have to keep a picture of them as a memento.”

“Oh, I'll take one too!”

The sound of these two shutterbugs echoing in the silent doorway brought us back to reality, and we quickly backed away, but the burning in our faces did not easily subside.

# Chapter 28 What If I Was Honest

“What do you think? Don’t you think I got a good shot?”

“It’s perfect. Akiho, please send me that picture later. I’ll process it and put it into good use.”

We had sukiyaki (Footnote: Hot pot with meat (mostly thinly sliced beef), vegetables and other ingredients.) for dinner this evening. It was supposed to be hamburger steak, but after all, if there’s one thing to eat together on a cold day, it has to be hot pot! ‘Then, after the club activities, let’s get the two of them to eat some delicious meat! ‘So, Kaede suggested having sukiyaki.

The vegetables were bought along with the ingredients used for making chocolates, but only the meat was brought by Miyamoto-san (Footnote: For those who have forgotten, it was the driver in earlier chapters.). The Wagyu beef, which was something you could never find in supermarkets, looked very expensive (Footnote: Very expensive, high-quality Japanese beef with a high quantity of fat marbled into the meat). It was beautifully marbled, and when you ate it, the meat felt firm, yet tasted meltingly sweet, with a non-sticky aftertaste that made it easy to eat as much as one wanted.

“Do you want a picture of you both hugging, Yuya? I took one too. Should I send it to you later?”

“Do me a favor and delete it right now.”

“Why? Yuya and Hitotsuba-san looked so happy at this moment.”

No, no, no, no! I know, I know! I know! It’s true that when I was hugging Kaede, I was the happiest I’ve ever been! But now that I’ve regained my

senses and am in a calm state of mind, I feel so embarrassed by that act that I want to end myself. In addition, the dialogue must have felt so cringy in so many ways.

“So when Yuya-kun said to me ‘You wanted me to pick you, right? Then I’ll have you... just as you wish, Kaede’, I wanted to scream. It was the first time he called me ‘Kaede’ with his voice a little lower than usual, but it was also very cool!”

“Whoa! The fact that he openly said such things to you, is very amazing... As expected of Shin-kun’s best friend. Yoshi is truly a very dangerous person because he can do it so naturally...”

“That’s right! After that, I asked him to hug me and he hugged me very gently but also quite strongly... Haa... I was so happy!”

People say that three women together make adulterous conversations, but it seems like two women were enough to be this intimate. My heart was already groggy from the ongoing fuss over what I had done. Can’t you both just let it go?

“I guess we’ll just have to put up with it until the two of them feel better. Come on, let’s eat meat! It’s not every day we get to eat meat like this!”

Oh, Shinji. I’m so glad you’re here. If you hadn’t been there, it would have been a situation too horrible to even imagine. I would have been crying in my bedroom under the covers, disregarding the fine Wagyu beef.

“Ahahaha. You’re exaggerating. There’s nothing wrong with feeling happy when you hug the girl you love.”

Shinji remarked as he chewed on the meat. I know that, too. It’s just that this situation was too much of a storm for me to keep up with. It’s definitely a situation that all men would enjoy, but there was one fact that I couldn’t forget. It has taken up residence in my mind. The fact that it was more like I was the one who wanted to scream at her to not let go.

“It was up to Yuya to decide what to do, so I can’t say anything. But if I had

to say something, I would say that Hitotsuba-san would be fine with that.”

“Shinji... you...”

“Yuya, you’re my partner on the pitch. I can kind of understand what you’re thinking. So, Yuya. I think you should be brave and jump in.”

‘Delicious!’ Shinji exclaimed, gobbling up more and more meat while I wondered where he was stuffing it into his tiny body. I smiled bitterly and sighed deeply. Oh dear, my best friend can see right through me.

“Okay, fine! I’ll eat too! Kaede, add more meat and vegetables! Otsuki-san! You can send the pictures, but only to Kaede! If you spread it around, I won’t accept it!”

For now, I’ll eat meat! It was common sense to eat good food to regain your wits and prepare yourself for battle. It was a battle where I had to be a little more honest about my feelings. If Kaede was always coming on to me and making me look embarrassed, I’m going to try as hard to do the same thing to her and make her look embarrassed.

“Huh. It’s okay to eat a lot of food, but there’s dessert waiting for you afterwards, so please do so in moderation, okay? It’s a little early for Valentine’s Day!”

Kaede said, smiling like a goddess. Yes, there was that too. I’ve been preoccupied with the sukiyaki, but today’s main dish was not the meat, but the Valentine’s Day chocolates that the two of them made. Shinji, do you even have enough space to eat that?

“I’m fine. I have a separate stomach for sweets. Besides, if it’s something that Akiho has worked hard to make, I can eat it no matter how full I am.”

‘That’s the way it is, isn’t it?’ Don’t ask me something like this as if it’s natural. Otsuki-san was grinning, and Kaede-san was looking at me expectantly. Oh my god!

“Of course. How could I leave out the food Kaede made for me? Besides,

Shinji. Kaede's home cooking is the best in Japan. I'm not going to let you eat it."

"Yes, yes. Enjoy your meal. I won't even give a bite of Akiho's chocolate to Yuya, so keep that in mind!"

The two girls laughed in embarrassment at the sudden start of their man's vain competition.

## Chapter 29 The Man whos unconsciously flirting

It was decided that the two men would clean up after dinner. Kaede and Otsuki-san told us to take it easy, but we felt bad asking them to clean up after making chocolate for us as well as cooking.

“The Sukiyaki was delicious. I knew from your bento that you’re a really good cook, Hitotsuba-san.”

“Yes, I guess so. To be honest, it’s even beyond the level of taste you get at home. I really think you could open a restaurant. But, except for one thing.”

As I washed the dishes alongside Shinji, I thought back to the first time Kaede cooked dinner for us. That day, she made a stewed Hamburg steak (Footnote: It’s not the meat on a hamburger; it’s the Japanese version of a Salisbury steak, simmered in a sauce.) as I had requested, and I was impressed with the taste, but how it was served on the table...

“Back then, you put the whole pan on the table! Are you kidding me? Couldn’t you have used a plate or something?”

“Yes, that’s right. Isn’t it quite a surprise? I was thinking that Kaede would have arranged the food perfectly today, so I was astonished that she just dumped everything into the whole pot on the table.”

At that time, I remembered Miyamoto-san’s words.

‘Kaede-sama’s cooking is a bit peculiar, but I can guarantee the taste.’

It wasn't the cooking that was quirky, though, but the serving! If Miyamoto-san was aware of it, why didn't he just point it out! It was quite hard to explain to Kaede back then, who had brought the whole pan with a smug look on her face as if it was the natural thing to do! Kaede's words at that time also surprised me.

'I think it's a good idea because it reduces the number of dishes to wash, right?'

"Ahahaha! That's impressive of Hitotsuba-san! While you're right, that doesn't mean you should serve it like that!"

"I know! I'm sure Shinji thinks so too! But Kaede's puzzled face made me wonder if I was actually wrong. It was hard for me to question myself about it..."

But with my tearful persuasion, Kaede has learned to serve it correctly! Every now and then she has the urge to bring the whole pan or pot, but she's doing her best to resist, and at this rate, the urge might naturally disappear.

"Oh my God! Yuya-kun, please don't reveal such embarrassing things without permission! Higure-kun laughed at me! Oh, you're also laughing too much, Akiho-chan!"

How could I not talk about this when the two of them were there? I had been preoccupied with the hugging photo, but Kaede's "serving the whole pan" was just a golden story to share. How could I not talk about it?

"Hey Yoshi! Do you have any pictures of that? That was the first time Kaede-chan served Yoshi a home-cooked meal, right? Didn't you take at least one picture?"

I'm glad you asked, Otsuki-san! I've got a good shot of Kaede! Look at this smug face of hers! There were times when she puffed out her chest with pride, and other times when she was embarrassed and smiled shyly after having my picture taken so many times and all of the Kaede's are extremely cute, aren't they? Here, this one's my favorite.



“Ah... yeah, that’s a good shot. It really is, but...”

“All the photos are focused on Hitotsuba-san, and the food is totally an afterthought present in them. Yuya, can you please stop being so naturally flirtatious with Hitotsuba-san?”

“Ugh..., Yuya-kun, you baka... you said it was a secret between the two of us...”

It’s also very cute after this picture! It’s funny how she served the whole pan. At the restaurant, the food was served properly on a plate. That was why it was really strange to serve the whole pan. I even said to her ‘If you don’t want to wash the dishes, I’ll do them for you’. It was so great to see her with her face reddened and embarrassed after I had explained everything to her! What do you think, Shinji?

“Hahahaha... Yes, you’re right. It seems that Hitotsuba-san is not the same person as she is at school.”

That’s right, that’s right. The dignified Kaede at school was beautiful and cool, but it was also cute to see her with a pouty face like this. Hey, why are you looking away and smiling bitterly?

“Oh, Yuya. I understand that you want to boast about the cute side of your girlfriend that only you know, but why don’t you give her a break? Look at Hitotsuba-san. I think she’s about to boil over and collapse.”

When Shinji asked me to look at Kaede, she looked so red that I thought steam was emerging out of her face. Her shoulders were trembling as well.

“Ugh..., Akiho-chan. Yuya-kun is... Yuya-kun is...!”

“Alright, alright. It’s okay, it’s okay, Kaede-chan. It’s hard to have a boyfriend who’s unconsciously flirting.”

Huh? I’m not trying to flirt, okay!? I’m just trying to let you two know how cute Kaede is at home, you know!?

“Unconsciously flirting is quite tough for others, Yuya.”

Shinji, not you too!

“Yes, yes. I can understand that Yoshi really loves Kaede. Let’s move on to today’s main topic!”

After Otsuki-san’s words, Kaede was pulled back to reality, pointed at me and declared.

“Now it’s Yuya-kun’s turn to be thrilled! Please accept my loving Valentine’s Day chocolate!”

At last, Kaede’s handmade chocolates were presented.

And even with her presented reddish face, Kaede looked very cute.

## Chapter 30 Chocolate Cake filled with Thoughts

After Kaede announced that she was going to make me thrilled, I nervously took my seat. Oh no, my heart was already racing so fast as if it were to almost fly out of my mouth. It wasn't the first time I've received valentine's chocolate from a girl, so why?

I glanced sideways at Shinji, who was sitting next to me, and saw that he was smiling as softly as ever. Why, don't you ever get nervous?

"Nervous? Why? You must rather look forward to it. I can't stop wondering what kind of chocolate my favorite girlfriend is going to present to me, and I can't stop being excited!"

So this is what the man who's part of the so-called 'best couple in the school' was capable of. And I can't do it. The pain in the chest makes me feel like I'm going to fall apart if I can't keep my composure.

"Yes, yes—s! Here you go, boys! But it's only Shin-kun and Yoshi. Do you want a special valentine's chocolate just for the two of you from your cute lovers — !?"

Otsuki-san raised her fist towards the sky with a smile like that. Isn't the tension in the air way too high? Kaede also looked happy with her smiling face. But I couldn't keep up with the sudden intense tension.

"I want Akiho's homemade chocolate —!"

Shinji raised his fist in the same manner with a big smile on his face in a

joyful manner. Isn't he adapting quickly? Oh, Kaede, why do you look so unhappy? Why are you turning away from me?

“Hey, Yoshi! Don't you want to eat Kaede's Valentine's Day chocolate, HUH — !!??”

“Yuya-kun... don't you want to eat it...?”

Kaede mumbled very sadly in contrast to Otsuki-san's high tension. Wait, why am I the bad guy here? ‘Don't you want to eat it?’ You're kidding me. How could that be?

“Of course I want to eat it —!!”

“WHOOAA!! WELL SAID, YOSHIII!! Well then, the time is almost up, so I'll hand mine over quickly!”

Where do you get that kind of energy from? As if there was a drum roll mixed in her voice, Otsuki-san held out a small pink wrapped box in front of Shinji. The box was carefully wrapped with a ribbon and a sticker with a message that read ‘Happy Valentine's Day!’.

“Wow, thank you, Akiho. Hey, can I open it?”

“Mmm-hmm. Of course you can, Shin-kun!”

Otsuki-san replied with a thumbs up. Shaking his body with excitement, Shinji slowly removed the ribbon and peeled off the wrapping. He opened the box and what he found inside was —

“It's Shin's favorite gâteau de chocolat (Footnote: French for chocolate cake.)! It's a little bitter, so even Shin-kun, who doesn't like sweets, can eat it. Please enjoy it!”

“... No, I'm not going to do that now. I'll eat it slowly later. We can't be all flirty in front of Yuya and Hitotsuba-san, can we?”

Hey, come on, Shinji! What would you have planned to do in someone else's house? Were you going to feed each other? Your father won't let you do that!

“Yes, yes. Calm down, Yuya. It’s still too stimulating for you, so I won’t do it here, so don’t worry. More importantly, look, Hitotsuba-san is waiting for you, okay?”

“Yuya-kun, is it time for me now? I worked very hard to make that and... I want you to eat it.”

As Kaede squirmed and fidgeted, I saw a thin slice of chocolate cake on a plate in front of me. I gasped at the perfection of the cake, which made me think for a moment that it had been bought from a store.

The rich, sweet aroma hit my senses. But at the same time, it also contained a faintly refreshing aroma. Looking at the cross-section, I could see that it was made up of three layers.

“It has three layers: chocolate sponge, mousse, and cream. In between, there is orange cream as an accent and the top is coated with caramel.”

She explained it to me, but I was just stunned. When I was in junior high school, the Valentine’s Day chocolates I received were homemade, but they were cookies or something, so I had never seen anything this authentic. Who would have guessed? Three layers! With orange cream accents! The caramel coating was also comparable to something you’d find at a high-end confectionery store!

“What do you think...? Does it suit your taste?”

“Yeah. It’s good. It’s so good. I’ve never had such a delicious chocolate cake before. Thank you, Kaede.”

“That’s all, Yoshi!? You’re a terrible food reporter! Shouldn’t there be something more!? Come on, squeeze it out!”

Shut up, Otsuki-san! I wish I could say something clever, but I can’t find any good words. Kaede’s eyes were glazed over and she couldn’t even look at me. Meanwhile, I couldn’t help but be annoyed by Shinji’s smirk.

“I don’t know how to say it properly. It’s not just the taste, but the fact that

you made something like this that makes me so happy. It's hard to make sweets by hand, isn't it? And yet, I never thought that you could make something like this from scratch. It makes me so happy to see that you think that much of me..."

I swallowed the words 'I'm sorry' at the same time. One step. Yes, all I had to do was take a step forward. The fear that sticks in my heart like a thorn makes me hesitate to do so, but I have to change.

"Thank you, Kaede. Thank you for making such a delicious cake for me. I can really feel how much you care for me. Keep up the good work."

"... Yuya-kun... Yes! I'd like to thank you as well!"

I praised her with a sly smile and tasted the sourness of the orange and the sweetness of the chocolate. The two favors harmonized in my mouth as I savored the food while appreciating Kaede's thoughts that were added to it. Before I knew it, there was nothing left on the plate. I wanted to eat more.

"Hehe. Don't worry. There's still plenty left. Would you like some more?"

"Oh, I'd love to have one more..., but I'm not going to. I'll have another one tomorrow night. Is that okay?"

"Of course. Let's eat together then. I'll give you an ahhh."

"Hahahaha. Then I'll give you an ahhh too, and we'll feed each other."

Kaede's eyes widened at my casual remark. And that's not the only thing. The air in this entire room froze. I'm not sure if I just said something terrible —?

"Hey, hey, Shin-kun. Did you hear what Yoshi just said? He said, 'Let's play "ahh" and feed each other'. Is he flirting?"

"I did hear that, Akiho. Yuya really said, 'Let's play "ahh" and feed each other'. I should've recorded it."

Shut up, you two! I mean, can you two please leave now!?

“That’s right, Shin-kun. If we stay any longer, we’ll be in the way of the two young ones, so we’ll leave them alone.”

“You’re right, Akiho. It would be a shame if we disturbed their sweet night, so we’ll just go home.”

After preparing to depart with lightning speed, Shinji and Otsuki-san left with a smile on their faces. While being puzzled by their skillfulness, I received the following message from Shinji on my phone.

‘Be gentle with her, Yuya.’

“Mind your own business, you f\*\*\*\*t!”

I resisted the urge to throw my phone at him and went back to the living room. Kaede was still frozen up.

Good grief, please reboot yourself for goodness sake.

~ The conversation between Shinji Higure and Otsuki Akiho after they left the apartment. ~

“Hey hey, Shin-kun. I think I forgot to ask them something very important...”

“That’s right, Akiho. I forgot to ask them too why those two started to live together.”

“Aaah! I was more interested in listening to their story than the chocolate! I forgot about it because their lovey-dovey atmosphere was too precious!”

“Hahaha... Well, you don’t have to force yourself to ask them. I’m sure the two of them will tell us soon. I’m sure of it.”

“Oh, yeah! I’m sure Yoshi will tell you! Hey, Shin-kun, what do you think the reason is?”

“I don’t know... since they’re living together in such an amazing apartment, do you think Hitotsuba-san might be pressuring Yuya into a relationship?”

“Yeah, it’s possible! Kaede-chan’s love for Yoshi is beyond comparison! ‘I’ll die if you don’t live with me!’ Or something like that.”

“Hmmm. But that’s not true only for Hitotsuba-san. In fact, she might have put Yuya too in a situation where he couldn’t escape anymore. She is very clever, Hitotsuba-san.”

The two of them were on their way home, having a conversation in which they may or may not be convinced of that.



## Chapter 31 Thats cheating...

Kaede quickly regained her senses. As we relaxed in the quiet living room with a cup of hot tea in our hands, Kaede stared at the plate on the table and then spoke up, with a voice filled with determination.

“Yuya-kun. I want to eat chocolate cake too! Can I have some?”

“You want some? It’s fine, but why are you asking?”

“Because... this was made for Yuya-kun, wouldn’t it defeat the purpose if I ate it?”

If you have a lot of food, it’s better to eat it together, as Kaede herself had said earlier. It’s worse to eat it all at once and ruin your stomach. But it was almost 10 pm. Was it fine to eat something so sweet at this hour?

“It’s okay! No matter how much sweet stuff I eat, it’s absolutely justified! Besides, I’m not fat!”

She declared it like a doctor who uses her skills as a weapon to say things that the women of the world would grit their teeth in jealousy if heard. Well, as I found out after living with her, Kaede ate a lot. But her fascinating body shape did not change at all, and even her ‘chest armor’(Footnote: That’s not censoring from our side; this is really what he’s thinking.) seems to have been strengthened. It’s just my imagination, right?

“Ah... speaking of which, my underwear has been getting tighter lately. What kind of underwear do you like, Yuya?”

Hhuuuuh!? WHAATT!!?? What do you mean, they’re still growing!? I mean,

don't you dare lean forward while tightening your b\*\*\*\*\*s in your sweater! It's so stimulating! Extremely stimulating!

"I think I'd like to match Yuya-kun's preferences anyway. What kind of underwear would you like me to wear?"

She smiled devilishly and leaned close to me, straddling the table. I did my best to turn my head to look completely elsewhere in order to prevent seeing her at all. Nevertheless, Kaede moved into the perfect position, appearing right in my line of sight.

"Is it the neat white type? Or a floral pattern like the apron might also be cute. How about a fresh light blue? Bright colors make you feel refreshed! Or how about black for a more mature image? It will make me look sexier, great for seducing you, Yuya-kun! Speaking of seduction, isn't pink even better? It's said pink is quite lew-"

"STOO—OP!! I will not let you say anything else! You wanted to eat the cake, right!? I'll bring it to you, so just sit down and be quiet!"

There was no way I was going to let the word "lewd" come out of Kaede's mouth! I cut off the conversation and left the table with the plates. I was annoyed by Kaede's smirking, happy face. She was enjoying watching my reaction, wasn't she? Watch me.

I took out the cake from the refrigerator. The cake was so beautifully decorated that I thought it had been bought. I was hesitant to put a knife in it, despite the cake being meant to be cut into pieces.

I cut it, taking great care not to make the piece lose its shape, and put it on a plate. The fork was still on the table, so I didn't get another.

"Here, I've brought the cake. You wanted to eat it, didn't you?"

"Thank you very much. Where's the fork?"

"Oh, just use this. I don't need to bring a new one, right?"

Yes, I handed Kaede the one I had been using, and she froze up again.

Hehehe. Just according to keikaku. [TN: Keikaku means plan.] But this was not the end of it. I'll make sure to make you pay for your sins, for teasing me so much with a man's dream!

"That's right. You said earlier that you wanted me to kiss you. So if you insist, it can't be helped."

"— Whaa!? Yuyuyuyuya-kun!? What are you talking about!? Have you gone, insane!?"

While she was being confused, I put my fork into the cake and cut it into easy-to-eat pieces. I brought it slowly to Kaede's mouth, who was being flustered with a fully activated panic switch.

"Okay, Kaede. Aa—h?"

"Uu... Uu..."

She looked from side to side, looked down, shook her shoulders, clenched her fists, and looked up at the ceiling with an unintelligible voice. I wonder if she was that conflicted. It's not a problem at all though, because she looked too cute.

"Ah, aa—hh..."

She ate a piece of cake on the fork. Her face turned bright red like colored autumn leaves.

"How is it? Does it taste good?"

"I don't know... I'm too excited to... taste it."

Kaede said in a thin voice as she stared at me with jittery eyes. What's so exciting that you can't even taste it?

"Because of this.... indirect kissing, ... I've had an indirect kiss... with Yuya-kun, you know... Of course I'm going to be nervous..."

The destructive power of Kaede, who looked up and said shyly, then put a

fork in her mouth staring upward, was definitely of strategic grade. This was like a final resort that turned the battle situation upside down with just a single blow. The ‘you know’ shot used for the final push was enough to blow my mind to pieces. In other words, my face was boiled to a crisp as well.

“Oh, no... I just thought I could see your embarrassed face if I gave you a surprise ‘ahh’ as payback for teasing me! And I didn’t expect you to be that surprised by an indirect kiss, you see!?”

Kaede silently plunged the cake into my mouth while I was wildly gesticulating to explain myself. And the fork that Kaede had been holding in her mouth just a moment ago was now in my mouth. It’s strange, the chocolate feels sweeter than when I ate it a while ago. And my face is really hot. My heart aches.

“I want Yuya-kun to understand too. It’s not like you can’t be embarrassed... by kissing someone you love, even indirectly. But it can be just... as pleasing...”

I could only nod my head as Kaede appealed to me with a watery film over her eyes. It was more embarrassing than I had imagined. It’s almost as embarrassing as kissing when indirect kissing is involved. But Kaede was also right about the other aspect. It kind of fills my heart.

“That’s cheating, Yuya-kun. How can you make me nervous so easily... I wanted to do something to you and make you nervous, but... that’s cheating!”

“No, it’s not a matter of cheating or not cheating, you know? In fact, if that’s the case, Kaede is pretty much a cheater too! No, Kaede’s very existence itself is cheating!”

“What the h\*\*l does that mean!? Isn’t it terrible that my existence is a cheat!?”

“Of course! In the first place, ever since I suddenly found myself living with the ... cute girl I’ve always been admiring, I’ve been both happy and embarrassed, and I’ve been nervous every day! I’m not even sure if I’ve ever

had a day where I wasn't nervous! You should know that, you... baka."

After I blurted that out, I felt too embarrassed and got up from my seat. I wanted to punch myself for saying that I had a crush on Kaede just a few seconds ago. If there was a hole, this was exactly what I would want to jump into. In times like this, I would normally take a bath. Yes, let's escape to the bath. The bath is a sacred place to wash away the events of this day.

"No...! Don't go, Yuya-kun."

As I was about to head to the bathroom to get ready for my bath, Kaede hugged me tightly on my back.

"Please don't leave me alone. If I'm left alone now..."

"What happens if you're... left alone?"

I swallowed my gulp and waited for Kaede's words.

"If I'm left alone now, I'll go crazy with... happiness."

'Teehee', she added at the end.

I felt dizzy from her cuteness. And since I didn't want her to go crazy, I sat on the couch with her until Kaede was satisfied and we spent a lazy, slightly early Valentine's night.

## Chapter 32 Awareness of feelings

It took Kaede an hour to calm down. In the meantime, we were watching an anime that was being distributed online. It was a pretty crazy romantic comedy anime, and the high tension from start to finish made it pretty interesting. In the series, the characters skipped class on the rooftop, played games, and always acted unreasonably when they got embarrassed.

“It’s getting late. Shall we take a bath?”

“It’s almost 10 pm. That’s right. I’ll go heat the water, but Kaede should go first. Or do you want to come in with me?”

I smiled wickedly and suggested a mixed bath. It might make me go crazy again after all the effort I’ve made to calm myself down, but I think it’s okay to have a day like this once in a while. It’s a good day to get back at her for always making me feel nervous.

“Oh, dear. Please don’t make jokes like that. Well, I’ll take your word for it and take a bath first. In the meantime, Yuya-kun, please play a game and wait for me.”

Yes, yes. I understand. I’ll wait quietly. But wait, that Kaede didn’t come on board, even though she was a little embarrassed? What happened to you? Did you eat something strange?

“I don’t always have to be pushing all the time, you know? I’ve learned that sometimes it’s important to pull back too!”

Kaede clenched her fists and headed for the bathroom. I was left alone, and I didn’t understand what she meant by that, but I couldn’t bother thinking

about it, so I decided to take her word for it and play my game. It was the first time I've turned it on since coming to this house.

The storyline of this game, which I've been too busy to play, was already in its midst. The game was a remake of The Seventh and Final Story, and it was garnering a lot of attention around the world. I had some thoughts about the fact that the story was split up into two parts, but I'll take it as an interesting take. I won't complain as long as they finish the story before I die.

How quiet.

Time flew by as I was mesmerized by the beautiful graphics. Kaede came back in her fuzzy pajamas, wiping her hair. The boss battle was about to begin, so I saved my game and got up from the couch.

"Oh, are you done? You can keep doing this for a while longer, okay?"

"As much as I'd like to continue, I need to take a bath. And I don't know when to stop, so this is perfect. I'm going to take a bath. You can go to bed first, okay?"

"Huh. I'll wait there. Please take your time."

I wonder what's going on. It felt quite strange. Normally, she would say something like, 'I think I'll take a dip in the bathtub again after all', but now, she was so casual about it. It's really strange.

Well, it's no use thinking about it. If I can take a bath without having to pay attention to my guard, I'll enjoy it. I'm physically exhausted from today's club activities, and mentally exhausted from dinner and the Valentine's Day party. Let's take it easy and relax.

\* \* \* \* \*

I ended up sinking into the bathtub for almost an hour. By the time I finished brushing my teeth and preparing for bed, the date had changed.

"Kaede... You didn't have to wait for me..."

“It’s okay. I just wanted to wait for Yuya-kun. Did you feel good in the bath?”

“I’m sure it did. Thanks to it, I’m tired and ready to work hard tomorrow.”

“I’m glad to hear that. Now, let’s go to bed.”

Kaede dimmed the lights with the remote control at hand. It wasn’t the best idea to get into a futon with a warm body, but it was definitely better than being unable to sleep due to your feet being cold.

A lot has happened today. The sukiyaki was delicious, and Kaede’s homemade cake for Valentine’s Day chocolate was superb. On top of that, we even feed each other and — kissed indirectly. No, don’t think about it. I won’t be able to sleep.

“Hey ..... Yuya-kun. Are you awake?”

“Yeah. I’m awake. What’s wrong?”

I always slept with my back to Kaede because I didn’t want anything to accidentally happen to her and I would lose my sleep if I were to see her sleeping face. So instinctively, I answered her questions without looking back, but that was a mistake.

“Can I sleep a little... closer... to you, Yuya-kun?”

Kaede, who had already moved before I knew it, hugged me from behind. She asked me in a sweet voice that was more debauched than usual, and the soft scent of lemon made me feel at ease, but also confused my brain. The warmth of Kaede’s body against my back and the soft touch of hers would drive men crazy. I could feel her arms wrapped tightly around my waist, trembling slightly with tension. I could also feel my heart beating loudly as if it was about to break.

“Yeah, ... you can.”

I couldn’t refuse Kaede’s request, which she had tried so hard to speak up with all the courage she could muster. No, I’d rather be the one to turn around



and hug her like this. That was the kind of urge I currently had.

“I was very happy today. The person I love hugged me tightly, praised the sweets I worked so hard to make as delicious as possible, and let me eat them. He also gave me an indirect kiss. It was such a happy day that I could have died.”

Kaede’s confession made my heart start to throb. Please stop. I’m so happy, but please stop.

“But I want to experience even more... How happy I would be if I could sleep while being squeezed by the person I love. ...”



That's cheating. Kaede is really cheating. If I were to be pampered like that with a voice that sounds like she's about to cry, I really would want to give in to her selfishness.

"... Thank you for today, Kaede."

When I turned my body around to face her and gently hugged her, Kaede's shoulders jumped. But soon after, she pulled her cheek to my chest and smiled coyly.

"Ehehe... Yuya-kun, you are so warm. And you smell so good. ... I think I'm going to sleep more soundly than usual today."

I see. And I probably won't be able to sleep until morning.

But. If it makes you feel happy, that's fine with me. Yes, if you're happy, I'm fine with that. Because I'm happy to be with you.

"Good night, Yuya-kun. I love you."

Truly. I can't help it anymore. My heart is deeply drawn to Kaede.

It was on this February night when I became aware of this.

# Chapter 33 The Two Strawberries

The week ended and the morning of Valentine's Day finally arrived. All the boys were nervous, and their conversations seemed to be even more restless than usual. The girls, on the other hand, seemed to be enjoying their exchange of individually wrapped chocolates with their friends. However, there was a fire in their eyes, and it seemed like they were restraining each other.

And me? I feel like I'm going to fall into a dream if I don't think about something to help make me stay awake.

"You look sleepy this morning. What's wrong?"

It was Shinji who refreshingly called out to me while I was lying face-down at my desk. I'd like to ask him how he manages to have the same fresh smile every morning.

"It's because I call Akiho every day before I go to bed. So why does Yuya look so sleepy? Did something happen to you that you couldn't sleep?"

"Oh... well. I've been through a lot since that day. I just couldn't sleep very well."

Last weekend I had spent dinner with Shinji and his friends. After they had left, something had happened. That night, Kaede and I had hugged each other.

After that day, the distance between me and Kaede at home became even closer. To be more specific, we don't sleep hugging each other, but we do sleep closer, literally.

“Shinji, you should listen to Otsuki-san’s cute sleep breathing in your ear. It’ll make your sleepiness go away in an instant.”

” Heh, ... so you sleep with Hitotsuba-san every day. And that’s at a distance where you can ever hear her breathing in her sleep.”

“Oh, no no..., ... that’s not possible.”

Watch out, watch out. I almost inadvertently told Shinji again. People are creatures that learn. They will never play the same trick over and over again.

“Well, it’s like you’re half-confessing...”

Shinji laughed and took out his textbook from his bag and started to prepare for the first period. I better get ready, too. I stretched my stiff back and pulled out my textbook from the bag as well. I used to leave my books at home, but I changed my mind when I came to live with Kaede. She’s studying so hard. When I see that every day, I knew that I couldn’t afford to lose.

“That’s not important, Yuya. Shouldn’t you be really looking forward to the extracurricular camp next week? It’s rare to have a camp this time of year, and that’s even with skiing and stargazing. I’m sure it’ll be fun!”

“... I guess so. I’ve never skied before, so I’m not sure if I can ski well. And, what’s stargazing? ... A forced push for youth?”

“If that’s a sales pitch from Yuya-kun, I’ll gladly buy it up myself.”

Whoa! Where did you come out of the blue, Kaede? And as usual, Otsuki-san is with you? It has become a norm for the four of us to have conversations in every morning’s HR.

“It’s a three-day extracurricular camp at the end of the month. Unfortunately, we’re in different classes, so we’ll have to take separate buses to get there, but we’ll be together there!”

“Yeah, I guess so. It’s a little sad that we’ll be separated, but I guess it won’t matter once we get there. Yes, I’m looking forward to it, Kaede. Let’s look at the stars together.”

“Yes, .....! I’m also looking forward to seeing the stars with you, Yuya-kun!”

Her smile I see at home is good, but Kaede’s big smile at school is also great. It’s fresh, or perhaps it has a different feel to it.

“Hey, hey, Shin-kun. What is this sweet atmosphere that suddenly started? Why are all the boys looking like zombies?”

“It can’t be helped, Akiho. The two of them are in the same state they were when we started dating. Well, the boys look dead, but the girls are looking at them enviously.”

“After all, Yoshi is cool. ... The truth is that Kaede-chan came here because \_\_\_”

“Akiho-chan! Don’t say anything else! You promised not to tell anyone about it, didn’t you!? Is your mouth helium!?”

A mouth lighter than air. (Footnote: Helium is a gas lighter than air. That’s the pun. And now, the pun is ruined because of this explanation.) I guess I can’t ask Otsuki-san for advice. I was going to ask her what I should buy for White Day, but I guess I shouldn’t.

“Ehhhhh — why not? It’s fine to say that you were worried that Yoshi would get Valentine’s Day chocolates from other girls and you got anxious.”

“You’re such a baaakaaa, Ahiiikooo-channn!! Why are you revealing everything!? If you do this, Yuya-kun will think I’m a controlling girlfriend!”

No, I didn’t misunderstand you. It’s just that your objective was quite forceful. (Footnote: Originally an idiom, which meant: to remove obstacles in the way of one’s objective.) Well, if I look at the other side of the coin, the constraints are proof of how much she loves me. It is a man’s good fortune of mine that Kaede thinks so much of me. I’ve never been happier. [TN: This is one of Yuya’s quicks, NOT a wisdom/moral.]

“Mouu, you’re such a baka, Yuya-kun...”

Kaede smiled with a blush on her face. Ah, her embarrassed face is cute too.

“Yes, yes. Thank you for this morning’s feast! I’m going back to class soon, Kaede-chan! Let’s meet again at lunchtime!”

“Ah...! Don’t pull me away, Akiho-chan. Yuya-kun, see you later!”

She waved us off, saying she’d see us later. Hey, Shinji. What’s with that scowl? Do you have a problem with me?

“... Couple.”

That’s the last thing I need to hear! You’re the only one I don’t want to hear it from!

“You really should be more careful about giving off an unconscious strawberry air, okay? People will get hit by the sweetness and will faint sooner or later.”

What do you mean by ‘strawberry air’? But my question was mercilessly drowned out by the chime.

# Chapter 34 Don't go Flirting Everywhere!

It was lunchtime, four hours after Shinji informed me not to unintentionally create the so-called 'strawberry air'. The four of us were unusually eating lunch in the cafeteria this time. This morning's incident made it difficult for me to enter the classroom.

As a passport-free alternative in the United Kingdom, the plan of the extra-curricular camp was that we would be staying in a resort facility that recreated a medieval English town on a vast site of 73,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The exterior and interior of the guesthouse where we will be staying also had the same design. It was also a famous tourist destination, having been used as a filming location for a TV drama.

As I've never been involved in any kind of snow sports in my life, I didn't have any of that kind of equipment, so I thought I'd better buy it as soon as possible.

"I've already prepared a set of clothing for Yuya-kun. By the way, I have a matching pair with yours!"

I found myself already getting provided by Kaede. Well, it was officially the work of Miyamoto-san, the chauffeur and butler. When I asked her how it looked, she showed me a picture. The design featured color blocks with simple blue and light blue tones. By the way, Kaede's was the same, just in red and pink. Wait, wasn't this a famous and expensive brand?

"You don't have to worry about the price. I asked my father about it and he



was happy to buy it for us. Rather, now we can go skiing together one day! I'm so excited!"

"Oh well... but that means I must be able to ski to a certain extent too, right? Do you have any idea, Kaede?"

"Don't worry! I'll be there to guide you through the day, one step at a time! Just leave it to me!"

Oh, what encouraging words! Kaede-sensei, please teach me, a beginner, how to do it!

"Hehe. Don't worry, I'll teach you gently and carefully. Ehehe... and when Yuya-kun is about to fall down, I'll hold him and then we will hug each other on the snow... Ehehe..."

Alright. I'll be careful not to fall down in front of Kaede-sensei. But if that still happens, then fall forward! Of course, I won't be shy to fall on my buttocks in front of Kaede. Still, if it's just the two of us, it will be a bit less embarrassing to fall down and then hug each other alone on the snow rather than in front of an audience. [TN: In the raw, he doesn't say this out loud at all.]

"You can't control the release of 'strawberry air', can you, Yuya? There's nothing more I can comment on."

"I had no idea Yoshi was such a natural. Good luck with that, Kaede-chan!"

"I can't. ... It's impossible because it always comes at me whenever I'm not expecting it..."

Kaede looked down with not only her face, but also her ears turning bright red. I don't think I said anything funny, so tell me, Shinji-senpai!

"I mean, who wouldn't be embarrassed if someone said to you, 'I'm embarrassed to hug you in front of everyone, but it's fine if we're alone'? I'd feel embarrassed too if I were to hear that."

"That's right, Yoshi! Thanks to your unintentional strawberry comment,

we're already down to zero life! Kaede-chan's at the point where even a resurrection spell won't help her get back on her feet!"

"Ugh ..... It's okay, Akiho. But if anything happens, I want you to take full responsibility for what you say, Yuya-kun."

What do you mean by that, Kaede? Are you saying that you want to hug me while lying down on the snow and that too without falling down? I'm sure that's too hard to do, right?

"You'll have to hug me until I'm satisfied. Be prepared for that. I won't let you sleep tonight, okay?"

"... Please don't say anything that can only be misinterpreted."

Fortunately, she whispered it close to my ear so that only I could hear it. But that inevitably meant that she closed the distance between us. So what would happen if we did that in a cafeteria full of students? Of course, the first screams of envy could already be heard.

"Yuya, Hitotsuba-san. This is not home, so be careful, okay?"

"That's right, Kaede-chan. You don't have to say that so close to Yoshi, right? Rather, you're both so natural in your interactions... You already seem like a newlywed couple!"

Otsuki-san, I think you're overstating the case for newlyweds. It is true that we are living together, and even if it is a definite future that we will eventually become married so if we continue at this rate, it is too much of a leap at this point in time.

"Is that so? Do we look like newlyweds to you?"

"Yes, I can see it. I can see it really well. You both really look like a loving newlywed couple. You would even play around in the upcoming welcome festival. But Kaede-chan... this is a school, so you'd better behave yourself."

Isn't this about as normal an exchange as you can get? Well, I agree it was quite careless to talk with our faces close to each other, but since it's Shinji

and Otsuki-san, they wouldn't mind this much, right?

"It's a problem because it's Hitotsuba-san and Yuya... It's nothing compared to me and Akiho. But maybe this is the best way for you."

"What do you mean by that, Shinji?"

"Because if you're flirting so openly, no one should try to come between you two, right? If anyone did, they would neither be brave nor fierce, that would only make them a fool or an airhead who can't read the air."

You said 'fool' and 'airhead' in such a harsh way. But you've got a point. I've been watching Shinji and Otsuki-san get along every day, and yet the thought of messing with him never even crossed my mind. There was no room for error in the strong bond between the two.

"That sort of thing is a solid wall for Yuya and Hitotsuba-san which prevents anyone else from getting through. No, it's more like a barrier around the two of you. Really, it's amazing."

Do Kaede and I have that kind of air about us? From the outside, I guess we have, but in my mind, we were not quite at this level of intimacy. In the first place, I haven't told Kaede exactly how I feel about her.

So I'm going to use this extracurricular camp to convey my feelings to her. I'm sure it will be fine. It's not like those parents of mine, if I do my best, she won't disappear from my side.

"Good luck, Yuya. I'm rooting for you."

Thank you, Shinji. I'm really happy to have you as a friend.

"Hey, hey, Kaede-chan. Don't you think the atmosphere between Shin-kun and Yoshi is also quite spicy?"

"Yes, you're right, Akiho-chan. I feel there's something more than just friendship between those two. It's bad."

You two girls. Don't let your imagination get the better of you!

Until the lunch break was over, the four of us spent our time discussing about the extracurricular camp.

## Chapter 35 A sulking Kaede

We had just finished our daily club activities as usual, but there was something different about this day. Kaede had already left.

But I know why. It's the chocolates in the bags I'm holding with both hands.

“Kaede...”

During the club activities, girls came to give chocolates to the members of the football club team, who were looking for them, including me. To be honest, I would have liked to refuse, but Shinji, who was standing next to me, received the chocolate with a fresh smile, so I had no choice but to do the same. When Kaede saw this, she looked at me and spoke.

“Ugh... Yuya-kun, you idiot... you're too much of a flirting philanderer... I don't know anymore!”

And then she ran off. But I'm not in this flirting mood of mine, you know!? I wanted to scream, but there were several girls in front of me, so I couldn't even reach out and chase after her.

In the end, the manager took care of all the chocolates because they were a hindrance to practice, and they were then distributed to the appropriate people after club activities. It was a shame for the others, but it wasn't good to interfere with the club activity. As a result, I now had a gift in my hand from a girl whose name and face I didn't know, but I honestly couldn't be bothered with it.

“I don't think anything of the chocolates I got from anyone other than Kaede...”

Perhaps it was heartless for me to think so. But I couldn't help it. I received the best chocolate ever from the person I wanted the most, and I've just spent the sweetest, happiest night of my life.

“You can't give chocolate to someone who has a girlfriend, right? I haven't confessed to her yet, so she's not officially my girlfriend, but...”

Today, Shinji told me that Kaede and I had been unconsciously forming a 'strawberry space'. Even if I argued that I didn't intend to, the two of them, who were already famous for being a couple, kept being vocal about it.

“ “Shut up, you second-generation couple!” ”

What was wrong? What did I do wrong? Was it when I promised Kaede that we would look at the stars together? Or was it when I told her that I wanted to hug her as much as I could when we were alone? No, rather all of them? I still don't know.

“But this doesn't matter. What should I say to Kaede...?”

The question remained unanswered while going back home. The next thing I knew, I was already standing in front of my house. Oh my God. What should I do? Is Kaede angry? Or is she crying? It's no use thinking about it! Let's go!

“I'm, I'm home...”

Normally, she would come to the door from the living room, making a pattering sound as she would greet me with 'Welcome home', but today, there was no response. The door was unlocked, so there was no doubt that she was somewhere in here, but where?

“... ya... kun..... Yu... ya... kun...”

A faint muttering sound could be heard. It wasn't a sob, but a voice filled with a certain sweetness. It was probably coming from the bedroom. I silenced my breath and stealthily sneaked towards the scene. It was as if I was pretending to be a spy with the codename 'Snake'. (Footnotes: Snake

from Metal Gear Solid.)

“Yuya-kun... Yuya-kun...”

As I got closer, the voice I heard became clearer. Was she calling out my name? But the sound of her voice was more s\*\*y than usual.

“Suu... haha... suu... haha... hug me. Hug me tighter, don’t let me go...”

Kaede!!? What the h\*\*l are you doing!?

I did my best to resist the urge to scream at the sound of her charming voice coming from inside the bedroom, and slowly opened the door a little, taking great care not to be noticed.

“Yuya-kun is my own Yuya-kun, you know! I won’t give him to anyone else!”

If my brain was processing the information my eyeballs were capturing correctly, then what was happening in my bedroom right now was Kaede in our futon, lying on her back with her face in my nightgown, which had been soaked with my scent. And on the pillow too. Her legs were twitching. It looks cute. Wait no, it’s not!

“Hehe... smells good. It’s like I’m wrapped up in Yuya-kun... It’s the best...”

“... It seems that Kaede would rather sniff my pajamas than be hugged by me.”

“That’s not true! I would be more than happy to be hugged by the real Yuya-ku—!??? YUYUYUYA-KUN!??? How long have you been there!?”

Kaede jumped up and dashed back to the other side of the bed at high speed, the side where she usually slept. But she didn’t let go of my pajamas and kept hugging them tightly. I’m not sure why I feel so defeated.

“Err, it’s not like it, you know!? It’s not that I was jealous of the fact that Yuya-kun was getting chocolates from different girls, or that I was depressed

because I said something terrible to him!? It's not like I came home alone and got lonely wanting to smell Yuya-kun's scent and got excited when I did, you know!? That's not true, you know!?"

'Zee-hah, zee-hah, zee-hah, zee-hah.' Despite saying this, Kaede was breathing with her shoulder twitching. Yeah, you're somebody who already reveals all the answers beforehand, right? I didn't even need to ask a guiding question to make her spill it out.

"Ugh... Yuya-kun's a baka... why didn't you call out to me right away? You usually say 'I'm home'. Why did you come home quietly only today?"

"No, I said it properly. I thought it was strange that you didn't respond, but then I heard your voice in the bedroom..."

Well, I apologize for being less vocal than usual. But still, I didn't expect to see you with your face in my pajamas, you know?

"Well, what... are you sorry for? If you want to apologize, you can... sleep with a hug tonight, if that's okay with you. I'll do anything you want me to do, Kaede, to put you in a good mood, you know?"

"... Really? Are you going to do everything I want you to do? A man's word has to be kept, right?"

Oh, that's strange. I noticed that I'm supposed to do everything for Kaede, right? Well, that's not a problem in itself, but what's with the jittery eyes?

"Then later, put your arms around me. Rub my head. And... cuddle me all night and don't let go. Okay?"

"... As you say, my princess."

After saying the words I've always wanted to say, I hung my head. I'd be more than happy to sleep with Kaede's warmth in my arms.

"Phew. I'm looking forward to tonight. Oh, it's getting late, but welcome home, Yuya-kun. Dinner is ready, so let's eat!"



“I’m back, Kaede. Thank you for everything. I wonder what’s for dinner today – I’m looking forward to it.”

We enjoyed Kaede’s homemade yellowtail teriyaki. Then we took a bath to recover from our fatigue and fulfilled the Princess’s request.

“Ehehe... I’m happy. It’s good to sulk once in a while.”

Before bedtime. While I was stroking Kaede’s head with my arm pillow, she unexpectedly said this to me. No, if you sulk, it will make my heart ache, so can you please stop?

“No, please don’t. You don’t have to sulk, just tell me and I’ll do it for you.”

“I’ll never forget those words, will I?”

Kaede rubs her body even closer to mine. If I move my face a little, I could kiss her. I stare at the ceiling to make sure that doesn’t happen. Not yet. I’ve already decided that I’m going to kiss her after I confess my feelings to her. I’ve already decided on the timing. I think the order of things is wrong, but I have to be patient.

“Hmmm. You’re already very disciplined in a weird way... But I love that about you too!”

“Is this the part where I should say ‘thank you’?”

“Well, who knows? Come on, let’s get some sleep.”

The lights in the bedroom went down and it became pitch black. I took this as a sign to gently hug Kaede’s soft body.

“Good night, Yuya-kun.”

Please don’t call me out unexpectedly. And it’s a crime to say it in a sweet voice.

“... Good night, Kaede.”

I whispered in her ear and the curtain closed on this year's Valentine's Day.

## Chapter 36 A turbulent start

Time passed and it has been a week since Valentine's Day.

The morning of the extracurricular camp day has finally arrived. It was just after 9 am.

Kaede and I were on our way to school together as usual. We met up at 10 am in the school courtyard. From there, we were going to board the bus. It was a three-and-a-half-hour bus ride each way, divided into classes. But Kaede wasn't very happy about it.

"You see, Kaede. It's not easy to walk when you're clinging so tightly. There is also luggage, you know?"

"... I hate it. I won't be able to be with Yuya-kun for more than three hours from now. It's a shame that we have to travel separately. I'll miss you."

No, that's true, but... We're in different classes and I'm in a club, so we don't get to spend much time together at school either way. Compared to that, won't three hours just pass in a blink of an eye?

"It's different! It's totally different because I can't stand these three hours of travel! I wanted to talk to you on the bus and see the scenery and everything, but... the teacher's too hard-headed!"

It's not the teacher's fault, okay? I think it's still problematic because if the students get on the bus freely, it'll be too much trouble to take roll calls. Well, in our case, it's just two people sitting next to each other checking each other out. Personally, I don't really mind this situation, but I'm not going to tell her that.

“Mouu... Yuya-kun’s heartless...”

“Well, Kaede. If I could, I think it would be fun to be with you too. But there’s nothing I can do about it. When we get there, we’ll be having an experience about England culture today, right? I think we can sit next to each other then, and afterward, we have time for skiing and stargazing tomorrow, so we can be together. Is that not good enough?”

I would love to be with Kaede if I could. That’s how big she means to my life. I’ve been thinking about it ever since the day we fell asleep in each other’s arms. Wait, does that mean I’m going to bed without feeling Kaede’s warmth for the next two nights and three days?

“I can’t be satisfied without... Yuya-kun’s body...”

“Ahhhh! Be careful of your phrasing! I mean, you’re not wrong, but you sound really misleading, so correct that!”

It has been over a week since we started sleeping side by side in the middle of the bed. For the first few days I was so nervous I couldn’t sleep properly, but now I’ve got used to it and I’ve learned to feel the warmth of Kaede’s body along with the security of falling asleep.

“But please don’t say it like that because people will misunderstand it! If you say it like that, people will realize that I’m living with you. Don’t get carried away and speak too much!”

“I know, I know. I’ll be sure to take care of that. Yuya-kun, aren’t you the one who should be careful not to be led astray, especially by Higure-kun’s guidance? But well, I don’t mind if you do.”

I was free to choose my own seat on the bus, so I decided to sit next to Shinji. It would be rather painful and torturous to sit with a boy other than Shinji. If that were to happen, there wouldn’t be any way for escape, and I would surely be bombarded with questions.

“I will be next to Akiho-chan, so we will have a lot of girl talk during the trip. We’re going to brag about the best parts of each other’s boyfriends.”

What's that, talking about me and Shinji when we're not there? I mean, it's on the bus, so it's inevitable that the girls sitting around you will hear you and join in the conversation, right? Also, what do you mean, how are you going to talk about me?

"That's right... someone who can work harder than anyone else. A person with a strong heart who does not give in to despair. Someone who is not honest, someone who is clumsy but very kind who shows how much he cares for you, and even more? Oh, what's the matter, Yuya-kun? Why are you turning your face away? Will you look at me, please?"

I can't. There's no way I can turn around. Why do you keep coming up with compliments like that? I feel so embarrassed right now. I can't believe it's a cold winter's morning, but the heat is concentrated in my cheeks. If anything, even my ears are hot. How can you say something this embarrassing? We're almost at school!

"Humph. That's because I'm always thinking about you, Yuya-kun. If Higure-kun asks what you like about me, I wonder what you will say. I'm looking forward to it."

Wait a minute. Isn't that a strange way of putting it!? Is there anything going on that I'm not aware of!?

"I can't answer that. It's forbidden. You'll have to wait until the bus starts moving."

That's scary! What will Shinji ask me on the bus?

The extra-curricular camp was going to be turbulent. And it has already begun.

"I'm looking forward to it, the extracurricular camp!"

"I see. Well, if I didn't hear what you just said, I would have looked forward to it too."

Now, I don't care anymore what he'll ask. I'll answer him honestly then.

Prepare yourself, Kaede!

## Chapter 37 A schemer's errand

After listening to the Headmaster's words in this cold weather, I was completely chilled. I really wished for him to keep his speech short and precise. After this, we boarded the bus to reach our destination of the trip.

Shinji and I chose a seat at the front of the bus, where no one else wanted to sit. The others don't want to be close to where the teacher sat, so they inevitably choose the back. In other words, the front seats were the best choice because we would be away from the rumor mongers and the people who might be asking troublesome questions.

"I don't think people listen to our conversations on the bus that much. Aren't you overly concerned?"

Whose fault do you think it is that I'm so concerned!? Isn't it because you're up to no good!?

"What do you mean? I don't think there's anything special about it, is there? We're just talking to each other about – what we like about our respective girlfriends. Or do you want to talk about it in front of everyone at night?"

I don't want to talk about that. The cottage we will be staying in is for four people in each room. There were two bedrooms, and we would be separated when going to bed, but we would probably meet in the living room and have a chat anyway. Fortunately, the other two have girlfriends too, so I don't think there would be any undue jealousy, but I'm sure they would still ask questions. And, I really don't want to talk about that.

"No, wait. Does that mean you won't ask at the cottage, but you want me to

tell you now? I've already politely declined though."

"Don't be silly. We have a lot of free time on the road, so let me hear all about it. Or does Yuya want to hear me brag about Akiho? If so, that's fine, but... be prepared for it, okay?"

Listening to Shinji's boasting about Otsuki-san was almost like a kind of torture. He would ask me for my opinion and agreement every time. On such occasions, I couldn't reply to anything other than yes and it was kind of cute seeing him talking with a happy face. Normally, I'd rather sit next to him for almost three hours and listen to him bragging, but for today —

"All right, all right. I'll take you up on your offer."

Prepare yourself. If you want to ask me seriously, I'll do some serious boasting about Kaede. You are ready to writhe in agony, aren't you?

The roll call ended, and the bus started to move. As I listened to the bus guide's announcement, I thought about what to say.

\* \* \* \* \*

An hour and a half has passed since the bus departed, and we've just passed the turnaround to our destination. There was something strange about Shinji sitting next to me. I'm not sure why.

"Hey, hey Yuya... I've been bad, can you please forgive me soon?"

"Huh? There's nothing to forgive, is there? You're the one who asked me about it in the first place."

I went along with Shinji's plan and explained to him in detail what I found attractive about Kaede. Shinji had been to our house once, so he'd seen the gaps in Kaede's personality, so it was a little late to tell that, but I gave him some examples of how she'd tease me and then get embarrassed when I fought back — especially on Valentine's night. — I talked about her.

I also told him that Kaede was looking out for me more than anyone else. She didn't laugh at my football detentions, which everyone, except Shinji, looked



at coldly, but she acknowledged my efforts. She also praised me and encouraged me to do my best and I was very happy with that.

At first, I was just admiring her, was afraid to spend time with her, and more than that, I was nervous to death. But now it has become the norm and I'm now fascinated by the new side of her that I never knew existed. To put it bluntly, I can no longer imagine my life without Kaede. I can't tell her about this yet, though.

“Ha, hahaha... sorry. Yuya. I'm really sorry. I can't do this anymore. I can't listen to this. I didn't think it was this serious. Though I've brought it to myself...”

“Oh? What does that mean?”

Just as I was about to ask Shinji a question, the bus pulled into a service area. We were told that we would be stopping here for about fifteen minutes. As soon as we stopped, Shinji ran out of the bus like he was trying to get away from me. I'm not letting that b\*\*\*\*\*d get away!

I jumped off the bus in pursuit of Shinji, but he had already disappeared into thin air. Damn, what speed!

“Ah... Yuya-kun...!”

I was about to run after him when I heard a familiar voice calling my name. I turned around to see Kaede, and sure enough, there she was.

“Oh, Kaede. Good afternoon. How was it on the bus? Did you get any sleep?”

“Uhn. I'm fine. I've been talking to Akiho-chan and listening to music. Yuya-kun, how was it?”

What is it, Kaede's face seems to be red? I wonder if it was too hot in the bus. Well, the heating in our bus was almost too good. I'm sure that's why her face is red. But I don't like her question. Because for the last hour and a half I've been telling Shinji about Kaede's loveliness, with examples.

“Ah, ah... yeah. As Kaede said, Shinji asked me a lot of questions, but I was fine. I think it was more difficult for me to listen to Shinji bragging about it. Ahahaha!”

I decided to laugh and cover it up. There was no way I could say that here! I can't believe I told Shinji that I couldn't imagine life without Kaede anymore! That wouldn't be a confession, that would be a marriage proposal to her! I haven't even said 'I love you' to Kaede with all my heart yet! That's where the story should start at first.

“Oh, yes! Well, that's a shame! Oh, I have to go to the bathroom! I'll see you at our destination then!”

Bye-bye! Kaede waved her hand and fiercely dashed to the toilet. What was this feeling of being left alone?

“Yoshi can't be left behind! Hey, you big philandering devil!”

“— Otsuki-san? Huh, I'm a devil? What does that mean?”

It was Otsuki-san who called out to me, slapping me on the back with her bashing. It was really painful.

“What a story, this story! I see, Kaede-chan is so loved! See you later, Yoshi!”

Otsuki-san followed Kaede's back, laughing loudly. I don't know, maybe there really was something strange going on that I didn't know about.

“... Should I give Shinji a good interrogation?”

If he gets away with it now, it'll be the end of him when he comes back. I'll make him spill out everything he's been up to.

Shinji came back and put on his earphones and started listening to music, ignoring my question. When I asked him why he was doing this, he just looked at me apologetically.

“Sorry, Yuya. It was my fault. I'm really sorry.”

He only apologised. In the end, we arrived at our destination without me being able to find out the truth.

# Chapter 38 Squash any concerns before they arise

When we arrived at our destination, we first had to gather inside one of the facilities, the Manor House, with our luggage. I was hoping they would let us do something with our luggage, but the Headmaster made us listen to his explanation about the facilities and what we would be doing today.

First, we would be taken to the cottage for our stay as indicated in the reservations so that we could rest and unpack. An hour later we would meet again at the Manor House, where we were given an opportunity to experience British culture in our own way. This was followed by dinner and free time before returning to our cottage at 10 pm for bed.

“After this, we will have a cooking session about British food, right? I wonder what we will be cooking. I’m looking forward to it, Yuya.”

“It says that we can make either scones or shortbread, right? They say you decide on the spot. But it’s all in English, so it’s going to be a bit of a challenge, you know?”

The British cultural experience was the main selling point of this facility, but the lecturers were foreigners and the whole thing was conducted in English. If you wanted to communicate, you had to use English, no matter how poorly.

“Well, we can leave it to Kaede. She sounded very confident so I’m sure that we’ll be fine. And I can manage to listen to them too. So let’s take it easy.”

I owed it all to the one year of English classes I had taken as a kid. I was grateful to my idiot parents for this. I was confident I could understand English better than most people, and I even got a compliment when I had trained with Kaede for this day.

After quickly changing out of our school uniforms to more comfortable clothes, Shinji and I decided to relax in the living room of the cottage. It was just before 2 pm. Whenever I turned on this TV, there was nothing on but broadcasts or a few reruns of TV dramas. However, my other two roommates were sitting on the sofa, enjoying watching these reruns of cop dramas.

“Oh, Higure and Yoshizumi. Why don’t you come and watch it with us?”

“I’d prefer something different... I’ve already seen this one so many times...”

‘It doesn’t matter how many times you see it!’ That’s what Motegi Daichi shouted, holding the remote control close to his chest. He was a member of the baseball club, but his head wasn’t shaved. His coach thought that as if he could win with his head shaved without any difficulty. By the way, he was a regular player in his first year playing in the shortstop position. His girlfriend was a junior at the school and will be joining us this year. It’s so wholesome that she was chasing her boyfriend.

On the other hand, the one who reluctantly backed down after Motegi took the remote control from him was Sakaguchi Minato. He wore glasses, had a natural, unchanging haircut, and was a bit lacking in energy, but had a wide range of knowledge and could follow any topic, making him a walking treasure trove full of stories and a mass filled with communicative power. He was called the romantic hero because he had a childhood friend who went to another high school.

By the way, the detective drama they were watching was about two detectives who worked in a department known as the graveyard of human resources. ‘May I ask one last question, please?’ That was a line that one of the guys had the habit of saying. I like the first duo the best.

“Yoshizumi and Higurashi chose to cook, right? I decided on playing snooker

(Footnote: A game variant of billiard.) or something like that, and Sakaguchi has chosen English conversation. I mean, aren't you guys the only guys who choose cooking?"

Shut up. It was no use, Kaede and Otsuki-san said they wanted to cook. I didn't object to it because Shinji and I were fine with anything, but when we opened the book, we were surprised by the overwhelmingly high percentage of girls. And all the girls had boyfriends. Of course. They all surely had similar reasons for registering.

"If I just knew this, I would have decided to cook too. I don't know if I'll ever see Hitotsuba-san in an apron in my entire life."

That's too bad, Motegi. Then I've already seen Kaede in her lovely apron many times. And not just that, but the way she looks after me as she cooks for me. She gives off the feeling of being a newly-wed wife and I'm always happy whenever I see her.

"Damn it! Yoshizumi! I'll ask you a lot of questions later! You'd better be ready for that!"

"About that... Motegi. You don't want to say anything inappropriate, so don't ask him about that..."

"Hey, what's that supposed to mean, Higure?"

"Oh... what can I say... you will probably die. You'll die of sugar overload, agony, and despair. So don't say anything wrong, just don't do it. I've been there, done that, and I'm here to advise you."

Motegi nodded his head, perhaps sensing something ominous in the tragic expression on Shinji's face and the advice of his, who had made a name for himself as a couple. I think I can avoid unnecessary inquiries now. Don't ask me too, Sakaguchi.

But isn't that a terrible thing to say, Shinji? When did I push you into despair? I think you're pretty much the same.

“Shut up. Do you know how Akiho and I felt when you guys were talking about kissing in front of us in a very natural way? Do you know how Akiho and I felt when we were hit by the strawberry air? It was so sweet that it gave me heartburn!”

What the h\*\*l! What’s wrong with that!? That’s because you guys made some extreme comments about feeding each other first and then made me see it! Don’t blame me, you couple!

“I understand... Yes, I understand very well. It seems that Yoshizumi and Hitotsuba-san are so much in love that Higure, who is famous for being a couple, has to say so. If I were to ask you what it’s like to get used to it, you would probably faint. That’s the way it is, isn’t it?”

“That’s the way it is. I’m sorry, but I really don’t think you should get too deep into this. If you really want to hear it, I won’t stop you...”

After Shinji’s pursuit, Motegi seemed to have decided to shut up and concentrate on the television. Sakaguchi was watching the drama, not paying attention to us as if he wasn’t interested.

“Well, we have some time, but let’s wait at the Manor House first. I want to see Akiho as soon as possible, and Yuya wants to talk to Hitotsuba-san, right?”

I guess so. I could spend some time in this cottage, but I think I’d rather be with Kaede if I could. I sent a message and got a reply immediately. It seems that Kaede felt the same way. I’m so glad.

“So Yuya and I are going to go ahead, lock the door, please.”

Shinji and I left the cottage. I’m not sure why Motegi’s face looked so sullen when he replied.

“You’ve made an early victim. I don’t think Motegi will ask us again. I think Sakaguchi always sees the four of us gathering together eating lunch, so he thought it was unnecessary to ask. I’m happy for you, Yuya. It seems you didn’t have to dig your own grave.”

I'm still going to answer whatever you ask, though, am I not? I told Shinji on the bus, but if you ask me what's cute about Kaede, I can tell you a lot, you know?

“Yeah, that's really got to stop, please.”

As if he didn't want to hear it, Shinji covered his ears and ran off. He was a terrible best friend to have asked me.



## Chapter 39 Ah, youth!

I didn't explain to you what the Manor House was like, but if I had to picture it in a nutshell, I'd say it seemed something like Hogwarts. The large lecture hall and cafeteria where we met both were a direct replica of that world.

And to top it all off, in the bedroom wardrobe of the guesthouse, there was a dressing gown just like the one the characters from the movies wore. It was the kind of set you'd also expect to find at a theme park in Osaka.

“Yuya—kun! This way!”

I turn my gaze towards the one who called my name. Kaede was waving widely with a big smile on her face. She too had changed from her school uniform into plain clothes that made it easy to move in. Today's outfit was a long slit knitted jumper of a soothing shade and a pleasantly pleated skirt. The skirt looked lovely swaying through the slit of the jumper.

“What do you think? Don't you think this outfit is cute?”

Kaede put her hands on her hips and posed like a model on the spot. It was no wonder she won the national high school girls' beauty pageant.

“Of course it looks good on you. It's hard to believe we're in high school together, you look so mature.”

“Hmm... Yuya-kun, what does that mean? Does it mean that I look old? What do you mean?”

I'm not sure why you would interpret it that way. I just said that you look mature, I never said that you are old. In fact, I would say that because of you

looking so mature and beautiful, it makes me nervous, or if we were walking next to each other, we would look like a couple with an age gap. In that case, can I be spoiled by you as a younger boyfriend?

“Mouu... If you’re going to say that, say it from the beginning! But, I am Yuya-kun’s older girlfriend then? Ehehe. I like that.”

It was no good. The smirk on her face was a sign of Kaede having a fantasy about something n\*\*\*\*y. In her mind, she probably was picturing herself as the older version of herself spoiling and seducing the younger version of myself.

I’m not sure if a light bulb was turned on inside her head or something, but Kaede has come up with some idea, and she was slowly approaching me as if bracing herself for a fight. This lecture room had a staircase, so I would inevitably be looking up at Kaede.

“Hey..., Yuya-kun. You can be spoiled by your sister a lot, you know?”

She whispered in my ear in a sweet voice and finally blew her breath on me. What the h\*\*l was that voice!? It was a different tone than normal, more mature and lustrous. An electric current ran through my body, making me shiver. My cheeks were burning, and my heart was beating at top speed. My breathing became totally ragged.

“Kaede! What was that? You surprised me!”

“I did it because Yuya-kun looked like he wanted to be pampered by an older sister, but it didn’t work, did it?”

No, no, no! In fact, thank you very much!

Hold on, what am I thinking? I can’t let yourself be carried away. If I don’t take a firm stand here, Kaede will get even more carried away and launch a second attack.

“Well then..., when this camp is over, I’ll give you lots... and lots of love, you know?”

Ka – e – de! You are too destructive in your pursuit! Please don't tempt me with such lasciviousness by putting your hands on my shoulders and hugging me! My heart is bursting; my mind is collapsing.

I swallowed my spit and thought of any words to get back at Kaede, who had a smile of achieving victory and a triumphant attitude.

“You can leave everything to your sister, Yu-kun. This older sister here will give you lots of love, okay?”

“Kaede! What's going on? There's something wrong with you!”

“What? I'm not doing anything wrong. I just love you, Yu-kun. Is that not okay?”

If I don't do anything, I'll be swallowed up by Kaede's love. It was dangerously tempting to lean towards her, just a little, and let my head rest over the fruits, which was emphasized by the knitwear. Am I sure about this? Isn't it nice?

“Hai, hai, hai! I'm sorry to interrupt your excitement, but that's enough, you two! I'm afraid we're going to die of sugar overload if we're left here in this room any longer!”

“That's right, Yuya. I know how you feel, but you need to pull yourself a little.”

Otsuki-san grabbed Kaede's and Shinji grabbed me by the neck and pulled us off. What are you doing to me!? I would like to complain, but when I thought about it calmly, it was pretty dangerous. Fortunately, besides the four of us, the only other person in the room was a foreign instructor on the facility staff.

“Kaede-chan! I don't care how much you love your boyfriend; you still have to know of TPO! (Footnote: Time- Place-Occasion: The right behavior depending on the time and place.) That was a bit too much! You should be sorry!”

“... Yes. I'm sorry...”

Kaede looked ashamed to be lectured by Otsuki-san. I'm not sure if it was something that Otsuki-san, who had been called a couple for years, can say, but I'm pretty sure that Kaede had a few screws loose just now.

“Well, it can't be helped. It's not home and it's not school either. I'm sure Hitotsuba-san was a little carried away.”

“Well, yeah. There were times something similar to this happened...”

I think the situation was too different from the norm for me to be excited. If this had been at home, I would have hugged Kaede with all my might.

“Still, it looks like you've bonded quite a bit, Yuya. Will you be going on a double date with us any time soon?”

“... Shut up.”

‘A double date isn't a bad idea, but let us have our time alone.’ There was no way I could say that, so I took a few deep breaths to calm my racing heart. And when I casually turned around, my eyes met with the foreign teacher who was getting ready.

“(In English) — Ah, youth!”

A wink, a fresh smile and a thumbs up! That was how an English gentleman should look like. I gave him a thumbs up back, but half in despair, half in defeat. Yes, I definitely have to act like an adolescent now!

Meanwhile, Otsuki-san's lecture to Kaede was still being continued.

“Ugh... Akiho-chan is bullying me. Yuya-kun, please help me!”

“You deserve it, Kaede.”

Well, it was very exciting, and I think I'd like it if we were alone next time.

# Chapter 40 Cooking Time

Me, Kaede, Shinji and Otsuki-san were in the middle of making scones. Kaede was smiling happily as she kneaded the dough for the scones in the apron she had been given.

“Yuya, you can admire it, but you have to knead the dough, okay?”

“... Shut up, Shinji. You’re not someone who’s allowed to say this.”

Shinji and I often tended to pause what we were doing. At any rate, it warms my heart just to see the two of them working together in front of me, looking so friendly. I want to look at them forever.

“(In English) You boys! Move your hands!”

I was in a daze when I received a reprimand from my teacher. But the tone of his voice was rather cheerful and it sounded more of a teasing, like, ‘Don’t fancy her, concentrate on making scones!’ Shinji and I tried to hide our embarrassment by looking down at the ball and doing our best to make the dough.

“Fufu. Yuya-kun, were you fawning over me?”

“Shin-kun, were you fawning over me?”

Sure enough, the two girls pursued us with smirking faces. In this kind of situation, Kaede was very troublesome. She would stare at me until I answered, and if I didn’t answer because I was embarrassed, she would get teary-eyed and sulk. And if this happened, I would immediately raise the white flag.

“Ah, yes. Kaede and her friends were having so much fun, we were both admiring them. Is it bad?”

“Wait, Yuya! What are you talking about? I’m not—”

Shut up, Shinji! You should just nod your head and let me handle this! It was better to be honest and tell the truth rather than to be pursued further and have Kaede and the others make fun of you for it.

“Oh, I see... that’s not bad at all..., yes.”

“Shi, Shin-kun, so you have that kind of thing going on too! Ahahaha... I didn’t know that!”

What kind of boy wouldn’t be thrilled to see a smile that was different from the ones he saw every day, a look that was only possible in this place? If he didn’t, his eyes must be blind!

“Kaede-chan... when I was listening to you talking about him on the bus, I had been thinking, does Yoshi always say this to you? Isn’t it dangerous?”

“Akiho-chan, so you finally understand... That’s right. Yuya-kun is natural at it. I think I heard him on the bus, and he says things that I would normally be too embarrassed to say. Thanks to that, I’m always in trouble.”

Kaede, what do you mean by that? What’s wrong with being honest about my admiration? Then, was it correct to say that I’m not admiring you? No, no, no, I couldn’t help it. It was a fact that I was admiring Kaede’s smile. You think the same about Otsuki-san, right, Shinji?

And there was one more thing that had been bothering me. What were you listening to on the bus, you two?

“Yuya. Isn’t it time to shut up?”

Shinji gave me an angry smile; his face was smiling, but his eyes were not. And I’m scared to death, so can you please stop slamming the dough into the bowl?

“If Yuya would just shut up and do the work, I’d stop, okay?”

“What did I do at all to deserve this...”

I don’t know what was going on, but I didn’t want to upset Shinji any more than I already have, so I kept my mouth shut and concentrated on my work.

But I could hear the sighs and murmurs of admiration from the girls in the classroom.

“I admire that about you, Hitotsuba-san. I’d so like to be able to express my feelings in a straightforward manner like that.”

“Yoshizumi-kun is really handsome because he says it as a matter of fact without being pretentious...”

In the meantime, the few boys have declared their defeat.

“I can’t do this... I would be dying of embarrassment...”

“So this is the skill of the man who ensnared Japan’s prettiest high school girl, Hitotsuba-san... I can’t do it!”

“(In English) Ah, in the middle of your youth. I see you are enjoying it.”

After a final blow from my teacher, I decided to remain silent until the scones were finished.

\* \* \* \* \*

The scones came out fine, but to be honest, the taste was a bit bland. They didn’t taste good and left my mouth a bit dry. No matter how much sweet milk tea one drank, it was difficult to enjoy them.

“It’s not sweetened, because that’s how it’s supposed to taste. It would be nice to have jam or something, but we don’t have that.”

Kaede, as expected, was eating her scones with a wry smile.

“I think it would taste better if you put chocolate chips or something to add sweetness. But for now, let’s just be patient. Shall we have our revenge at home?”

“No, thanks, I’ll pass...”

I’d rather have the chocolate cake you made the other day than make scones at home. That cake was so good. This comparison showed how difficult it was to make, compared to those scones.

Making the scones themselves was very easy. You just make the dough as instructed, knead it, shape it and bake it in the oven. There wasn’t a single complicated step. But the chocolate cake that Kaede made for me for Valentine’s Day was nothing like this. She must have dedicated a lot of time and effort to make it. It makes me painfully aware of it, but also very happy.

“I wish you could make it because I’d love to eat it again...”

“Of course, if Yuya-kun wants, I can always make it for you. But if I do, why don’t you make it together with me? I’m sure it’s more fun that way.”

That’s right. It’s not a bad idea for two people to sit in the kitchen and bake together. I’m sure I’ll make a mistake with the measurements, or the shape won’t be perfect, or something will happen. And yet, I’m sure—

“I don’t know if I can do it well, but I’m sure I’ll enjoy the time I spend cooking with you, Kaede. I have a feeling it will be fun.”

“Mou. You are a really good talker, Yuya-kun. But I’m glad you said that. I’m looking forward to making it with you.”

Kaede’s smile warmed my heart. Oh, I can’t wait to go home and make a cake.

“... Akiho. I know what you’re thinking, but don’t say anything, okay? If you poke into it, you’ll lose, alright?”

“Shin-kun... but isn’t this way too cruel!? Isn’t it a hard struggle not to say anything in front of this strawberry space!?”



“If you can’t stand it, you won’t be able to stand it in the future, so let’s get used to it while we still can, okay?”

Could you two please shut up? You can’t enter our world... and Shinji! Don’t say anything you don’t have to!

And tomorrow night. I’ve got a big game coming up for me. What if they find out...?

“What’s the matter, Yuya-kun? Your face is red, you know?”

‘I was thinking about how to tell you how I feel about you, Kaede.’ How could I say that? I laughed and pretended that it was nothing.

# Chapter 41 It's not fair to take me by surprise

We couldn't finish all of the tasteless scones and had to take the rest home. If we overdo it, we'll have to miss out on dinner. We were told that today it was fish and tomorrow it would be meat. It's not every day you get to eat such a fancy dinner, so it was natural to be excited.

"I wish we could have had meat on both days! I would have loved to eat a thick cut of steak!"

"I agree. I would have liked some meat, even if it was roast beef or something..."

We returned to the cottage and spent some time in the living room before dinner. Motegi and Sakaguchi had asked for meat both days. Surprisingly, Shinji nodded in agreement. Don't you get tired of eating meat every day? Even fish tastes good when it's fatty, don't you think?

"No, Yuya. In your case, regardless of whether it's meat or fish, Hitotsuba-san's cooking is the best, right? I'm sure you're thinking that you'd rather have Hitotsuba-san cook for you than the food here."

I'm sure I haven't said it or let it show on my face, but how do you know what I'm thinking? I'm sure the food Kaede had ever cooked just for me was the best food ever.

"I'm sure it is. Yuya is the kind of guy who says embarrassing things like that as if they're nothing. I'm sorry, I was stupid to ask."

Hey, don't shrug your shoulders and sigh. It's not like I said anything funny, right? Fine, it would be a bit strange to compare a high school girl's cooking with a professional's and declare that Kaede's was better.

But it can't be helped. While I'm eating, she'll look anxious, and when I tell her 'it's delicious', her cute smile blossoms. I can't tell you how much I love that face. It's the best.

"You'd better learn that unconscious flirtation can kill others, Yuya. Look at those two over there. Their faces are dead."

How is that possible? They both have girlfriends, the junior high school student and the strong childhood friend who's in another school, right? It's not a big deal for me to say something like that, is it?

"Hey, Sakaguchi. Can you easily say that your girlfriend's cooking is the best above all? I can't."

"I can't do it either, Motegi. No matter how good the food is, it can't be as good as the professionals... Yoshizumi is amazing..."

The two men turned white and looked up to the sky. You haven't even fought, and you're burnt out! No way, am I crazy after all?

"You're not crazy. But Yuya, you always say it so naturally that I don't think I can win. It's not that we're shy or don't act it out, it's just that you say it as easily and naturally as you would say '1+1 is 2'. You know, I'm one of them."

You know, Shinji. How could I not be ashamed? I'm embarrassed when I say it too, you know? But if you don't say it, you won't be able to express your gratitude, will you? I think it's not very convincing to say that I haven't told Kaede that I love her yet.

"I don't know why you can't say 'I love you', even I could say it. Why don't you just tell her?"

"... Shut up."

I snickered and turned my head away. I don't need you to tell me that.

\* \* \* \* \*

The dinner was delicious. The full course included salad, appetizer, soup, main course fish, and dessert. The food was also a feast for the senses. It was such a shame to finish it. I'm looking forward to tomorrow's steak.

"Huh... I'm so tired..."

I stretched out on the sofa, leaning back. When I turned my neck around, I heard a cracking sound. The long hours on the road and the baking had left me more tired than I thought I'd be. Normally I would take a relaxing soak in the bathroom, but sadly there weren't any large bathrooms in this establishment. You can't get rid of your tiredness in an installed bathroom.

"I can't wait to go home and have a bath..."

By the way, right now I was the only one in this cottage for some reason. Shinji had left, saying he was going to talk to Otsuki-san and flirt with her, while Motegi and Sakaguchi went to another boy's cottage to play. I wanted to see Kaede and talk to her too, but she seemed to have something she wanted to do. So I was left alone in the house.

"In any case..., tomorrow is the day..."

The decisive battle was a whole day away. The stargazing would take place after dinner. That was when our fates would be sealed. Shinji told me, 'What are you scared of in a battle that you've already won?' But I'm still nervous. It would be the first time I've ever confessed my feelings to a girl face to face.

"Haha... I don't think I can sleep..."

"— Do you feel lonely and unable to sleep without me then?"

Yeah, I guess so. If Kaede is next to me, I can probably have a comfortable sleep. If possible, it would be awesome to have a hug pillow or something.

“Without Yuya-kun, I’m also... lonely and can’t sleep, you know?”

Who am I talking to? Just as I was wondering, I felt a soft, seductive touch and a fluffy, citrus scent envelop me from behind. When I looked up, I saw that it was none other than Kaede.

“Whaa!? What’s going on!? Why is Kaede here!?”

“Fufufu. Is it no good? I came here to see you, Yuya-kun.”

I’m happy. I’m very happy because I’ve been wanting to see you. But isn’t it a foul thing to come find me in the cottage? I mean, it’s not fair to sneak up on me and hug me from behind, is it?

“Is it bad? I can’t sleep tonight while squeezing Yuya-kun, so I wanted to replenish my daily Yuya-kun doses while I can.”

Kaede’s embrace became even stronger. I gently touched her arm and surrendered to the sweetness of her touch. That’s because I wanted to hug her, too.

“I feel so relaxed. After all, the day won’t end without giving Yuya-kun a hug.”

“Ah... that’s right. I also like... that... to be hugged by Kaede.”

What is this situation!? Why is my heart fluttering!? Isn’t a surprise back hug supposed to be done by a man! I wanted to wrap myself around Kaede from behind, so why am I being wrapped around her!? It feels good to be hit in so many ways, but!

“T, thank you... I like... I like hugging Yuya-kun too, you know? Ahaha, I get embarrassed whenever I’m aware of it.”

Don’t say that with your face all red, Kaede! It’s so embarrassing, isn’t it!? While saying so, there was no sign of her letting go, and if anything, she hugged me even tighter. Nonetheless, it wasn’t painful, but comfortable.

“Hey, Yuya-kun. You were mumbling earlier, are you going to do something

tomorrow?”

Kaede asked me, putting her face close to my ear. Her eyes were soft, but the corners of her mouth were lifted up like a little devil smiling. You mean you’ve been listening to me talk to myself earlier!?

“Tomorrow we’re going stargazing, aren’t we? Are you going to surprise me with something then?”

“Well, you’ll have to wait until... tomorrow to find out...”

I replied bluntly, turning my head away. There was no way I could say that. Tomorrow night, under the stars, I planned to confess my love to you.

“Fufufu. I understand. Then I’ll look forward to your surprise tomorrow.”

Then, she kissed me on the cheek and let go of my body. In addition with the regret of the loss of warmth, the soft touch on the cheek caused a mild panic in my head.

“Okay! My daily dose of Yuya-kun has been replenished! It’s full! I’ll sleep well now. Thank you, Yuya-kun!”

Your surprise kiss is making me so nervous I can’t sleep, though, you know!?

“Ehehe. I’ll be back soon. I’m looking forward – to skiing tomorrow! Well, good night!”

“Ah, yeah... good night, Kaede.”

Kaede left the cottage like the wind. I sank down on the sofa, rubbing my cheek where she had kissed me.

“It’s not fair to take me by surprise, Kaede.”

## Chapter 42 Aren't lifts scary

It was the second day of the extracurricular camp. Today, we would go skiing in the morning and during the day, and after dinner we would go stargazing in the evening. It was also a day of destiny for me.

“Fufun ♪. I’m looking forward to skiing ♪. Yuya-kun is a beginner, so I’ll be teaching him exclusively ♪!”

Carrying a ski board on her left shoulder and holding a stock in her right hand, Kaede speaks in a good mood. Her mood was so uplifting you could almost hear her words with ♪.

“Hitotsuba-san’s and Yoshizumi-kun’s ski clothing are the same, aren’t they? It’s a pair look, isn’t it? I envy them.”

“I don’t understand how Hitotsuba-san can smile so much. Yoshizumi also looks very natural... They really are a perfect couple.”

“Yoshizumi-kun, aren’t you embarrassed about your pairing?”

I can hear the girls whispering about it, but let me correct one thing. Being paired up is embarrassing enough, you know! Well, I don’t feel bad about being called a perfect couple, but it’s tonight that I have to confess.

“What’s the matter with you, Yuya-kun? Are you afraid of skiing? Don’t worry, snow is your friend!”

Don’t say it like the famous line of the main character of the national football cartoon, ‘The ball is my friend’! Please don’t say it like that. Even if you fall on the snow and it doesn’t hurt much, it’s still scary to fall on your own, isn’t

it?

“Fufu. Didn’t I tell you? Even if you fall down, I will catch you. So don’t worry, you can just jump into my chest, okay?”

I’d love to do that, and I’d love to jump headfirst into Kaede’s chest, but you’ve been fantasizing about saving me from a fall and hugging me on the snow with a blurry smile on your face, haven’t you?

“Damn you..., Yoshizumi, you’re getting too carried away...!”

“Put me in that positio~o~o~on —!”

“Shall we? Hey, shall we execute Yoshizumi?”

Shut up, boys! I’m not getting carried away and I’m not going to surrender!

“Today, Yuya-kun has a hundred faces. Just when I thought you would be embarrassed, you wrinkled your brow and got angry instead. It’s refreshing.”

“I’m neither embarrassed nor angry. It’s just Kaede’s imagination, you know?”

I’m not going to admit that I was embarrassed by the girls pointing out the pairing, or that I was angry at the boys for wanting Kaede to sit next to them, so I answered bluntly.

“Fufu. Well, I’ll pretend you’re right. Come on, let’s go! The slopes are waiting for us!”

It’s not safe, so don’t grab my arm while carrying the ski planks! No amount of heavy clothing could hide the feel of your ample fruits! All around me, I heard envious sighs and hateful gnashing of teeth. I ignore them all.

\* \* \* \* \*

What was the first obstacle one faced when they started skiing? Getting on the lift, of course. You sit down at the right moment and glance behind you. The sensation of wobbling up a snow-covered mountain with an unfamiliar



board attached to both feet was inexplicably terrifying.

“You don’t need to look so worried, because you won’t fall.”

“Eh, I’m not scared, you know? I’m not scared at all. I think it’s just Kaede’s imagination, you know?”

“... Hmm. I see. Then... eh!”

“HIYAAA!!?? WHAT ARE YOU DOINGGG!?”

Kaede, you baka! What were you thinking, suddenly grabbing my shoulder and shaking me!? What if we fall!? No matter how soft the snow is underneath, it’s not safe to fall from this height, you know!?

“I, I’m sorry. I didn’t expect you to be so surprised... I knew you were scared.”

“I’m not scared, you know!? It’s because Kaede suddenly startled me! Don’t get me wrong!”

“...I’m so sorry. It’s all right. You don’t have to be afraid. Don’t worry, I’ll hold your hand.”

I told you I’m not afraid of you!? So why are you giving me such a pitying look! Well, I’m not embarrassed to be sitting in the lift, because no one can see us holding hands, and more importantly, I’m very happy to be holding hands with Kaede.

“Fufu. As I’m sure Yuya-kun is aware, getting off the lift is more difficult than getting on, right? If you don’t get off at the right time, you’ll fall flat on your face, you know?”

“... For real?”

“Yes, for real. And because it is dangerous to fall in front of the lift, the entire lift comes to an emergency stop. If this happens, the other passengers will be left in the air until Yuya-kun gets up and leaves, so it’s a big responsibility, right?”

Kaede. Why are you smirking and saying things that make people feel uneasy? Is it because you enjoy watching me tremble like a newborn fawn in fear? Aren't you a bad person?

“Mou, you don't have to look so stern. It's all right. I'll hold Yuya-kun's hand firmly – and we'll go down together, so please don't worry. Please leave everything to me... Yu-ya-kun~.”

Stop blowing! You can't do that, Kaede! No ear-blowing in a stuck lift! Ah, you just pecked me! Did you just nibble on my earlobe!? Why!?

“W-w-what are you doing all of a sudden!? I was so surprised, you know!?”

“Yuya-kun's earlobe was right there, so I couldn't resist... was this wrong?”

“No no no! I hope you know where we are, do you!? We're in a lift right now, you see!? What would you do if something happened to us!? If we're going to do this, can't we at least do it in a private room!? Then I'd be happy to —”

I was about to say that I would be happy to bite on Kaede's ear, but I held my tongue. No, I'm not going to say that, it would depend on tonight's results. Otherwise, my heart won't be cleared.

“With pleasure, Yuya-kun, what will you do to me? Please tell me. I'm so curious I can only sleep at night.”

“I mean, if you can sleep at night, why not ...! I mean, think about the time and place! Not here... More would be nice... Ah, no! Not now! Forget it!”

“— Hmm. Well then, I'll give you lots of nibbling when we get home, okay?”

Kaede's smile was as seductive as a witch's, and it held my gaze. And when she says she was going to do something, she always does it, that's who Hitotsuba Kaede is.

“Now that you have something to look forward to when you get home. Yuya-kun, are you ready to go?”

“What!? You want me to prepare myself for a sweet bite on my ear now!? Isn’t that a bit too early for that!?”

“No. Not about that. We’re getting ready to get off the lift. The summit is just around the corner.”

Oh, it’s true. What should I do? Because of Kaede, I didn’t perform any simulations in my head at all. My head was as white as the world presented in front of me.

“Yuya-kun. Hold my hand—yes, this will work. Place the planks on the ground with me and stand up quickly. If you do this, you will naturally start to slide.”

I nodded my head in agreement with Kaede’s gentle reminder. If I hold her hand, I’ll be fine.

“Then... let’s go... — Yes!”

I stood up to Kaede’s call. I was a little late, and Kaede took my hand, and I almost lost my balance, but the lift knocked me on my butt, and I managed to keep my momentum and get on the slope.

“Well done Yuya-kun, it’s working!”

“Hahaha... I got my butt handed to me though. Well, I guess it’s better than falling down.”

I feel like I’ve achieved a lot, but I’m only at the start. This is where it all begins.

“It’s all right! Leave it to Kaede-sensei! I’ll make you a great skier, Yuya-kun!”

“Please be gentle with me, Kaede-sensei.”

I’ll do my best so that when the time comes for me to ski with Kaede’s father-in-law, I’ll be ready!

# Chapter 43 Strawberry Hug on the Snow

“Hold the boards in a figure of eight and ski slowly. You’ll be fine. Just follow my instructions below and you’ll be able to slow down.”

“Oh, oh, ... I know. Slide in a figure of an S-shape. When stopping, strongly pull inwards. Yeah, I’m sure I’ll be fine.”

“Fufu. There’s nothing to be nervous about. If you get scared, fall backward from the waist down. Don’t panic if you go too fast. Okay?”

I nodded my head in agreement, but even though the course was gentle enough for beginners, it was still scary. But Kaede-sensei put on her goggles and dashingy slid off. Wow, it’s a two-plank-slide with her legs nicely aligned. [TL: When the planks are parallel to each other, I think.] Kaede’s wind-swept descent was very cool, to say the least.

“Yu-ya—kun! Please come this far~!”

Seriously? You’ve reached the bottom in no time at all, Kaede. She was smiling and waving at me, but to be honest, I’m really embarrassed. Because all eyes were focused on me.

There were a lot of families on this slope. And this was a beginner’s course. So inevitably, the age range was low.

“Yuya—kun? What’s wrong~? Hur~ry~ u~p~!”

Kaede-sensei, please don’t humiliate me anymore. See, all the parents and

children around me are looking at me with smiling faces. Ugh, I'm scared but I have to go!

I felt like an ace pilot of the Air Force. After shouting the word 'Go.' loudly in my mind, I glided down the slope with hesitation.

"Keep it up! Yuya-kun, you're good!"

Are you sure, sensei!? Are you really sure I'm skiing well? My stance is awkward, and I can only go straight ahead. Well, when you want to turn, you just put the foot opposite the direction you want to turn in front of you, right? Or were you supposed to put your weight on the opposite foot to the one you want to turn? Until you get used to it, let's try to put your foot forward in a straightforward manner. So I put my left foot forward first.

"That's good! I'm turning to the right! Now try turning to the left!"

All right, sensei. If you want to turn left, put your right foot forward. Oh, it's so easy to change directions!

"Hahaha! It's surprisingly easy to turn! I think I can handle this, Kaede!"

I have to confess that I'm getting a bit carried away with the fact that I was able to ski so well for the first time. I was able to turn left and right, so I tried to go faster and leaned forward as I had seen in the tutorial video.

"—Yuya-kun! No, it's dangerous!"

"I'm fine, I'm fine! It's gonna be okay!"

Let's conclude. There was nothing I could do about it. As soon as I leaned forward, the speed accelerated rapidly. I panicked and put too much pressure on my legs and I found myself turning to the left. Kaede's goal was just around the corner, but at the same time the safety net was closing in. Kaede was shouting something, but I couldn't hear her.

"Uwaah—!!"

"Yuya-kun—!!"

At a reasonable speed, I plunged into the net and fell into the snow. Luckily, the snow-covered ground was as soft as fresh snow, so it didn't hurt at all.  
[TL: Hmm... yes, the snow is made out of snow.]

I tried to sit up, but the board was in the way and I couldn't get up. I was about to wave to Kaede, who was desperately calling my name, to let her know I was okay, when...

“Yuya-kun—!”

“—Kaede!?”

The next thing I knew, Kaede was running up the slope and jumping into my chest. I was able to hold on to her, but thanks to her I was buried in the snow again.

“Mou! Why did you try to go faster!? What if you got hurt!?”

“I'm sorry. I just wanted to make sure I could handle it...”

“Yuya-kun, you baka...”

Finally, she muttered weakly and nuzzled her face into my chest. It was a disaster. Families were smiling at me, boys from my school who were waiting for the lift were trying to kill me, and girls were blushing and cheering in support.

“Ah..., Kaede. It's time to get up, otherwise you'll disturb the others. Can you move away from me...?”

“... No, I won't. I'm not leaving.”

“Please, don't be selfish. I promise I won't do this again. Let me go for now. I'll give you a big hug when I get home.”

As I said this, I patted Kaede on the head. I'm not sure I'd be comfortable hugging her in public, but I think I could handle this at home. It's not bad at all to be in close contact with Kaede on the snow, and I'd rather not be separated from her, but I'm at the end of my rope.

“Don’t forget what you just said..., okay? When I get home, I’m going to need you to cuddle me and stroke my head until I’m satisfied, okay? That’s a promise. If you break it, you will suffer from a thousand needles, okay?”

“Oh, a man never backs out from his word. So get up. Stand up, please.”

‘It couldn’t be helped then’, she said, her cheeks reddening as she stood up and reached out her hand to me. It was a little embarrassing, but I grabbed her hand and she pulled me up. Thanks to this, I was able to get up without any problems.

It was time to get back on track and go skiing again. In the afternoon we would try the intermediate course.

“It’s time to get back into the game and go skiing again. In the afternoon we’ll try the intermediate course!”

“The intermediate course is supposed to be steep, right? Even if I’m careful not to slide too fast, I’m sure I’ll tumble spectacularly...”

“If you fall, I can legally hug Yuya-kun again, so please fall a lot. Oh, and of course, as long as it doesn’t worry me, okay? Please don’t do anything else like you did earlier, okay?”

That’s absurd, Kaede-sensei. I’m sure that every time I fall, you’ll come running to me with blood in your hands. In this case, it’s nice to be worried for me, but it’s hard to reason with you hugging me every time. I never know when I might have to hug you back. That’s for tonight—

“Don’t be shy, Yuya-kun, you can hug me too, you know? Fufu~.”

She whispered in my ear and then dashed down the slope. Needless to say, all at once, my cheeks heated up while I vowed to get even tonight.

## Chapter 44 Three men make a loud racket

After a few one-on-one lessons with Kaede, I was finally competent enough to ski the intermediate course. I fell a few times, but apart from the first time into the net, I didn't have any spectacular falls and Kaede didn't hug me.

It was now past 7:30 pm. Only half an hour to go until the final battle of my destiny. Now I was killing time at the cottage until the stargazing meeting.

Dinner was steak, which was also discussed yesterday. The boys were very excited. It was certainly the thickest steak I had ever seen. It was the thickest steak I've ever seen, and yet it was so tender that I could easily slide my knife into it. The sweetness of the meat spread as soon as you put it in your mouth. It wasn't too fatty, so it was easy for girls to eat too. By the time we'd finished the dessert, our tiredness was gone and our hearts were filled with a sense of fullness and happiness.

"Oh... I'm so happy. Skiing was a disaster, but I'm glad we had some good meat!"

"It was the worst because some people created a space so annoyingly sweet, but the meat was delicious, so I guess there was no negative impact."

Motegi and Sakaguchi, who were also present, looked at me and told me how they felt about the day. Did I create that space so annoyingly sweet? I don't get what you're talking about. Even though Kaede laughed at me all the time and made me look pathetic?



“I’ve been watching from a distance, but I’m pretty sure you two had your own space on that slope. I mean, you were flirting with each other all over the place!”

“Me and Kaede? It’s not possible. It’s just me being teased as usual, you know?”

“That’s what all couples say. There’s a lot of evidence too, such as being in close contact in the lift, hugging Hitotsuba-san, and patting her head, who was worried about your bad fall. I’m sorry, but you’re totally guilty, Yuya.”

Motegi and Sakaguchi nodded as if to agree, ‘Yes, that’s right’. Also, Shinji talked as if he had been there to witness it. Maybe you were close by?

“... Look at that, look at that. That man was so immersed in his own world that he forgot that Akiho and I were in the lift right behind you. As soon as you both got off the lift, you started skiing together, so I thought that was it. ...”

So Shinji and Otsuki-san were standing in a line together, waiting for the lift. I see, that was why he was able to see everything. If that’s the case, don’t keep quiet and come talk to us.

“I can’t talk to you! You two are always in a world of your own, a world where nobody else can get in! And if I spoke to you, you’d be very unhappy, wouldn’t you? You’d look at me like I would be getting in your way, wouldn’t you?”

“... Yeah. Definitely.”

Which one of us was going to be unhappy? That would be both of us, of course.

“Look at you, you’re definitely a couple. No, you’re beyond a couple. You’re not even in the second generation or something this lukewarm. Well, ... what do you two think?”

“How about a Jell-O machine (Footnote: A Jell-O machine is a machine

producing a variety of Jell-O products, such as gelatin desserts, puddings, and pies with cream. In short, a sweets generator.)? You know how many men are getting jealous when they see the two of you together?”

“As for me, I’d like to form a group for victims of sugar overload...”

What does Moteji mean by ‘Jell-O machine’? If you say that, Shinji and Otsuki-san have been in love with each other more than enough to make you feel jealous. It was not right to apply it only on me and Kaede, you know!?

What does Sakaguchi mean by a group for victims of sugar overload? Are you complaining that you get heartburn from watching and listening to Kaede and me messing around because it’s too sweet? That’s ridiculous!

“I like both suggestions. Hmm, my guess would be... Maybe a couple simply in love? Or an irritating couple for heartburn?” [Footnote: Original: Mukappuru. Muka = Annoying, irritating, Kappuru = Couple.]

‘That’s fun to think about!’ said Shinji, laughing. Then the three of them started to make up new names for Kaede and I, such as ‘bakouple’ (Footnote: Baka + Couple. Now the pun is ruined since you now have checked the explanation.). I don’t get it.

But to be honest, I don’t have time to worry about them right now. I went back to my bedroom alone and simulated my confession in my mind.

“I’ll gently take her hand, put my hand on her shoulder when she’s surprised, look her in the eye and say ‘I love you’. It will be fine, it’s not difficult. It will be fine... Kaede would surely...”

I chanted it over and over again like an incantation, preparing myself for the final battle. Confessing will be such a nerve-wracking experience, won’t it?

\* \* \* \* \*

Time flies. If one stays indoors, one would only get stuck. So I decided to get some fresh air and calm down. So I said goodbye to the three of them and decided to leave the cottage first while being annoyed by Shinji’s face, as if

he knew everything.

If you look up at the sky, you would see countless stars in the dark night. It was a fantastic scene that you could never see in the city. Underneath it all, I'm going to tell Kaede...

"Ah, Yuya-kun..."

I was walking to the Manor House in a daze and I was called out. There is only one girl who calls me by my name.

"Kaede. Hey, what happened to Otsuki-san and everyone else?"

"Akiho-chan and her friends are watching TV until the last minute. I wanted to watch the stars, so I left first, but Yuya-kun, are you alone? What about Higure-kun? Is he watching TV?"

"... No, no. I don't know if there's a saying about three boys in a room, but they're talking nonsense. I got sick and tired of everyone mistreating me, so I came out."

I smiled affectionately as I said it and tried to cover it up. I couldn't tell her that I had been practicing my confession and my head was about to boil, so I came outside to cool myself down. And it was true to say that I had been mistreated.

"Ara, it's terrible that they mistreated Yuya-kun. What did they say to you? I'm curious!"

"... Lovouple." (Footnote: Love + Couple. Now another pun is ruined since you now have checked the explanation.)

In a small voice, I replied to Kaede as she leaned closer to me. Oh, the usual scent of Kaede. It was a nice, calming smell.

"..... Yes? Lovou... What's that?"

"So, it means love-couple. They say it's me and Kaede apparently. They're trying to think of more words than just 'couple', I think."

I don't know. I haven't confessed yet, so why should I be called a couple? I'm sure they'll be picking on me about that later tonight.

"I see, Higure-kun and his friends are quite troubling. But I was also told a lot by Akiho-chan. She said she was surprised that we started flirting with each other despite them being behind us. She seemed to be referring to the lift, but it was normal, right?"

That's right. For me and Kaede, it was the same old exchange in the lift, but for Shinji and Otsuki-san, it just looked like we were flirting. If that was the case, I wonder what would happen if they knew that we not only sleep on the same bed, but also hug each other sometimes.

"It doesn't matter what people say, right? So, Yuya-kun, please."

Kaede quickly reached out her hand to me. I didn't need to be told what to do. I took her hand and held it tight, intertwining our fingers.

"Fufu. I don't have a coat so I can't hide it, but sometimes it's nice."

"... Yeah."

I would have liked to confess my feelings right then and there, but alas, time was running out. The time for the assembly was approaching and the students began to emerge out of their cottages.

"I'm looking forward to stargazing."

"... Yeah."

Repeating the same words, I tightened my grip on Kaede's hand a little. I hoped that I could continue to hold her hand after this. That was what I'm wishing for.

'I'm not going anywhere, Yuya-kun.'

I thought I heard Kaede's gentle murmur of a voice.

## Chapter 45 Is it possible that she already knows

After the brief lecture at the manor house, everyone was supposed to move to their favorite place to watch the stars. The usual four of us, Kaede, Shinji and Otsuki-san, moved to a hilltop with a good view.

“Don’t worry, Yuya. You’ll be alone when the time is right, after me and Akiho are gone. You can’t wait to become a ‘meotoppuru’, right?” [TN: Meotoppuru, Meoto = Married couple, Kappuru = Couple.]

“Hey, Shinji. What’s a meotoppuru? Is that the one you discussed?”

While Kaede and Otsuki-san were walking behind us, gazing up at the sky and giggling, Shinji told me another weird term that had been decided at the silly meeting earlier. It seems that they decided on ‘meotoppuru’ to mean a couple who were already as close as husband and wife. Well, I don’t really care anymore.

“Do you think it’s a strange thing to say? It’s like you both already are newlyweds in love, Yuya and Hitotsuba-san!”

I dropped a hand knife on Shinji’s head as he spoke happily. What ‘a newlywed couple’, you baka. I’m not going to let you get in the way of my big game of a lifetime. Disappear quickly.

“Yes, yes. I understand. I’ll be out of your way in no time... so good luck, Yuya.”

He patted me on the back. This conversation, which was taking place some

distance away from her, was probably Shinji's way of trying to soothe my nervousness, which was making me feel as if my heart was about to burst.

"Hitotsuba-san also seems to be a bit fidgety. I think Akiho is trying to calm her down. She's really a worried meotoppuru. And that's because it's Yuya's fault, okay?"

"... Seriously, shut up. You don't have to tell me that. I know that."

Kaede occasionally glanced back at me. Her eyes had only one thing to say. You want me to come next to you, don't you? I know, Kaede. I'll come.

"I'll go to her, Shinji. It's time for you to make out with Ootsuki-san, isn't it?"

"Yes. I want to watch such a beautiful starry sky with her too."

We walked up to them quickly and I stood next to Kaede and Shinji stood next to Otsuki-san. Shinji took hold of Otsuki-san's hand and said.

"Then, from here on out, we will be separated from each other, okay? Both me and Akiho want to see this starry sky alone, and it's the same for Yuya and Hitotsuba-san, right?"

"Yeah, yeah! I've always wanted to see it alone with you too, Shin-kun, so let's do that! Kaede-chan, you would love to watch it alone with Yoshi, wouldn't you? You want to see it, don't you?"

"Yes, yes! I want to watch it alone with Yuya-kun. Isn't that right, Yuya-kun?"

"Of course I do. I want to watch it alone with Kaede, without anyone disturbing us."

As Shinji had done it with Otsuki-san, I gently took Kaede's hand in mine and intertwined our fingers. I gazed into her eyes, which looked surprised, and I continued to speak.

"I'll see you later, both of you. Let's go, Kaede."

“Yes, yes...”

I gently pulled Kaede’s hand, who had suddenly turned as quiet as a sheltered cat, and started walking. Now, where should we go? If possible, I prefer a quiet place.

“Yuya-kun, this way. I was told that the plateau up ahead is a good place to watch the stars. Would you like to go there?”

“I didn’t know there was such a place. By the way, who told you about it? The teacher?”

“Yes. I asked him where the best place for stargazing was, and he told me. Let’s go quickly!”

I found myself being pulled by Kaede in the same way as usual. But it was not safe to start running in the dark. It would be easy to slip on the snow.

“It’s all right! Yuya-kun, hurry up — kya!?”

“Kaede—!”

Kaede, who had been in a good mood, was caught in the frozen ground and was about to fall forward, but I pulled her up as hard as I could. This inevitably meant holding her to my chest, but before I felt any embarrassment, I felt relief.

“Look, I told you so. What about ‘it’s all right’? You’re not all right at all.”

“Oh, thank you...”

Kaede put her face on my chest quietly. I’m not sure if she’s sorry or not, but her expression was indescribably debauched. I found myself in close contact with her hands around my waist. I’m happy, but I couldn’t walk like this.

“If we don’t go soon, we won’t have time to see the stars, you know?”

“Ugh. ... I want to do this for a little while longer..., no?”

“... No.”

‘For now’, I added in my mind, while gently releasing Kaede’s body. I pretended not to hear the longing voice that came out of her mouth as I started walking again.

“Let’s go, Kaede. I have something to tell you. After that, if you don’t mind, we can...”

I want to hug you. I want you to let me hug you. But I couldn’t put it into words. It was embarrassing, wasn’t it? Besides, if I said that out loud, it would be like telling you the answer to what I wanted to say.

“Then when you have finished talking about it, please continue with... this, okay?”

Kaede. That depends on your answer.

“Fufu. I’m looking forward to it. This seems to be an important story of Yuya-kun. I’d like to hear it as soon as possible, so let’s hurry up.”

Is it possible she already knows I’m going to confess?



# Chapter 46 Beneath the stars

“That’s the Big Winter Triangle of Sirius, Betelgeuse and Procyon!”

Kaede pointed in joy towards the southern night sky and rhythmically recited the names of the primary stars in their own constellation. If this was the Summer Triangle in the night sky, it would become a song in itself. [TL: I guess the stars of the Summer Triangle Altair, Deneb, and Vega in Japanese form a song.]

“You can’t see stars like this in the city!”

“Yes, it’s... so... beautiful.”

But it was not the stars that were beautiful, it was Kaede. However, I swallowed my rhetoric. The high ground that Kaede had been told about by the lecturer was indeed a great spot for observation. You could feel the illusion of getting closer to the sky just by a little bit of climbing.

“I’m so happy to be able to watch such a wonderful starry sky with you, Yuya-kun. How do you feel, Yuya-kun?”

Kaede let go of my hand, and instead twined her arm around me. It was too defiantly cute to see her staring up at me, waiting for an answer. Normally I would have been embarrassed at this point and would have looked away and blurted something blunt, but not today.

“I feel the same way. I’m so happy to be with Kaede and... it’s a blessing.”

“Do, do you feel happy to be with me? Do you really feel that way...?”

Kaede asked with a slight tremble in her voice. I could see the melancholy in her eyes. Why does she feel anxious?

“Hey, Kaede. There’s something I haven’t been able to tell you for a long time now, will you listen to me?”

“... Of course. I will listen to you until the end, so please tell me how you feel, Yuya-kun. I’m prepared for it.”

Being prepared sounds like an exaggeration. I’m the one who has been doing it. Just the thought of you rejecting me is enough to make me faint.

We let go of our crossed arms and faced each other.

I took one deep breath and then—

“It’s been almost a month since we came to live together due to a crazy chance. As I got to know more and more about Kaede, who I didn’t know anything about before, I fell more and more in love with you than I could ever have.”

“The more I fell in love with Kaede, the more... scared I became. The more I love you, the more scared I am that you would leave me and go away. I know you’re not like that, but I’m worried. Because I was abandoned by my parents...”

“I don’t want to go through that again. I don’t want to be alone. That’s why I didn’t confess my feelings towards you.”

“But I’ve reached my limit. I’m falling in love with Kaede so much that I can’t keep my feelings for you in check anymore.”

“... Yuya-kun...”

“Kaede is the only one. You are the only one who acknowledged my efforts. Not only that, but you praised me and encouraged me to do my best. I was so happy about that. At first, I just admired you, but the more I got to know you, the more I loved you...”

I cut off my words here and took another deep breath. Kaede was crying.

“Kaede. I love you. More than anyone else in the world. Yoshizumi Yuya loves Hitotsuba Kaede with all his being.”

“— Yuya-kun!”

You’ve been patient. The moment I finished, Kaede moved forward to hug me. I caught her and hugged her tightly and gently.

“Finally... I’m so glad. I finally got to know about Yuya-kun’s feelings.”

“I’m sorry I kept you waiting.”

“It’s okay. It was worth the wait. Hey, you know what? My heart seems to be in shock, you know? But... fufu. Yuya-kun’s heart seems to be in a lot of trouble too.”

Of course. I confessed the feelings I had hidden for Kaede. That was why I couldn’t help but feel my heart beating like it was about to break. But I could tell you that Kaede’s heart was pounding just as hard as mine. I could almost hear the sound.

“Me too... Hitotsuba Kaede loves Yoshizumi Yuya with all her being. I love you more than anyone, Yuya-kun.”

With tears streaming down her face, but a smile on her face, Kaede answered me. I wiped her tears away with my fingers and gently touched her cheek as she purred like a cat. Oh, what a lovely person she is.

“Yuya-kun... hugging me and stroking me makes me very happy, but... is that all?”

“... Kaede?”

“You’re... a natural at it. So what I mean is—”

She lifted her arms from around my waist to my neck, stretched a little and placed her lips on mine.

My first kiss with Kaede tasted like tears.

The suddenness of it shook me up, but soon my heart was filled with so much happiness that I couldn't think about anything else. I just want to enjoy this happiness for now.

“Yuya-kun... I love you.”

“I love you, Kaede.”

We hugged each other so tightly and strongly that we didn't feel the cold anymore and provided each other warmth. Once I told her how I felt, strangely enough, I didn't mind telling her I loved her again. In fact, I wanted to say it over and over.

“Thank you so much, Yuya-kun. I'm very happy now.”

May this happiness last forever.

Kaede and I kissed for the second time, under the witness of the stars in the night sky with clear air.

We would remember this day for the rest of our lives. It was such a happy moment.



# Chapter 47 I want to monopolize

Kaede and I gazed at the stars until the last minute. Of course, we held hands the whole time. Kaede's mouth twitched in frustration, but it was too embarrassing to hug each other if anything should happen.

"Buu... you'll make it up to me for this, won't you?"

"... Okay. I'll make it up to you when we get home."

Rather, it was me who would beg her to let me hug her to my heart's content. Just feeling Kaede's body heat and scent made me feel happy. It makes me want to drift off to sleep.

"Ah... I want to sleep with Yuya-kun tonight. You share a bedroom with Higure-kun, don't you? I'm with Akiho-chan, so can we secretly swap places? Wouldn't that make everyone happy?"

Indeed. It was easy to sneak in and out of the house without anyone noticing. If the patrol comes, I could tell them that Shinji was tired and already asleep, and it would be all right. But...

"As much as I'd like to, I can't. Even if Shinji and Otsuki-san agree, I'm still against it. It's unacceptable."

"Why? Do you not want to spend the night with me, Yuya-kun?"

"It's not that I don't want to. If I could, I would want to sleep on the same bed as Kaede, as usual. Especially today. But..., I don't like that. I'm not a fan of the idea of any other man seeing Kaede in her... pajamas."

It would be possible to switch places without Motegi and Sakaguchi finding out. But what would happen if they suddenly came into your room, not knowing anything about you? They would see Kaede in her cute fuzzy pajamas. This was not acceptable. This was not something I could tolerate.

“I want to be the only man allowed to see Kaede in her pajamas. Even if it’s my best friend Shinji, it’s no good. And if it’s Motegi or Sakaguchi, it’s totally out of the question. As long as there is that possibility, I can’t accept this story. I’m sorry, Kaede.”

“... Yuya-kun, are you perhaps a bit possessive?”

“Is that so? Isn’t it normal to think that you should be the only one who knows how pretty the person you love is?”

If this is called possessiveness, then so be it. But aren’t all men like that? I’m sure there’s a side of Otsuki-san that only Shinji knows, and he won’t show nor tell me about it. It’s the same thing.

“I can’t handle this... Yuya-kun is still a natural. It’s not fair to make me nervous so easily. But... you’re right. I don’t want any man to see me in my pajamas except Yuya-kun. Because that’s how defenseless I am!”

Then Kaede hugged my arm. Her smile was as bright as the stars in the night sky. I couldn’t help but stroke her head. Her shiny black hair was as smooth as silk and didn’t stick on my fingers. It felt good to stroke it.

“Yuya-kun! What’s going on with you!? I can’t believe you’re suddenly stroking my head!?”

“You don’t like it? If Kaede doesn’t like it, I’ll stop...”

“No, don’t! Please don’t stop! I’d rather have you stroke me more! It feels so warm and comfortable to be nudged by Yuya-kun.”

‘Ehehe’, said Kaede with a delighted face. Oh my god, she’s so cute. I’m so tempted to squish her so much!

“But, Yuya-kun. Only stroking my head? Because I want to... kiss you again

before I go back.”

“... Yeah. I want to kiss Kaede, too.”

Slowly our faces came closer. As I closed my eyes and was about to place my lips on Kaede’s soft and plump lips... [TN: Classic trope incoming!]

“Ah! There you are! Ah...”

“Akiho! Don’t run! Oh, ...”

A couple of my best friends suddenly appeared, and Kaede and I quickly jumped away in a panic. Oh, no! You interrupted such a good moment!

“I thought it was time to come and pick you up, so I came here to find you. But what is this... Kaede-chan, I never knew you were this bold...”

“Akiho-chan! It was such a good moment! Why did you interrupt the best moment of my happy kiss with Yuya-kun!?”

With a heavy sigh while screaming ‘Aah!’, Kaede blushing put on airs and drew closer towards Otsuki-san in an instant, grabbed and shook her shoulder as if protesting. Good, Kaede, keep it up!

“It seems that you were able to convey your feelings properly, Yuya.”

“Well, thanks a lot. But you’ve got to think about your timing a bit. Didn’t you interrupt me at the perfect moment?”

“Hahaha. I guess I’ll just have to say I’m sorry about that.”

Well, for the third time in a row, I’m going to forgive you. If it was the fourth, I would never have forgiven you. It’s a mental note I’ll keep in mind forever, even if we are best friends.

“Wow. Yuya, when you want to do something, you just do it. I’m impressed.”

“Kaede-chan. I know how you feel. Yes, yes, I really do. Once you’ve kissed



him, you'll be so happy that you'll want to kiss him again and again. And if he confesses his love to you under this starry sky, you would be even happier."

Shinji's eyes widened in surprise while Otsuki-san, who was being shaken by her shoulder, explained her feelings with a knowing look. And Kaede changed her target from Otsuki-san to me and slapped me faintly with a red face.

"Oh my God! Why do you say that so casually, Yuya-kun!? I'm sure you're not ashamed of yourself!"

"I'm sorry. Of course I was embarrassed that I almost got seen, but I was more disappointed that I couldn't kiss Kaede..."

"Ugh... I can't beat a natural..."

Kaede placed her head on my chest without any force. I gently stroked it.

"Hey, Shin-kun. Yoshi is naturally stroking Kaede's head, is this a dream?"

"I'm sorry, Akiho. This is reality. And this is what Yuya looks like when he's honest. I didn't expect it to be at this high level..."

Shinji, you can say whatever you like. Was it so unusual for me to stroke Kaede's head? What's wrong with that? And when I do, Kaede's face gets really cute.

"Yu, Yuya-kun. It's embarrassing indeed..."

"Nuu... Let me stroke you a bit more, Kaede. Is it no good?"

"Ugh, it's..., it's not..."

I did it. Now that I have Kaede's permission, I can stroke her as much as I want. What is it, Shinji? Your face. Are you trying to interrupt me again?

"I don't mean to interrupt your world, okay? But I think it's time to go back."

“Shin-kun. Let’s leave the ‘meotoppuru’ alone and go back first. This is going to take forever, right?”

“That’s true too. Well then, Yuya, Hitotsuba-san. We’ll be leaving first. Don’t be late!”

After saying this, they turned back to the cottage.

“... Oh, let’s go back too.”

“Yes, that’s right. Let’s go back. We’ll continue this tomorrow when we get together again.”

I grasped Kaede’s hand firmly and walked with her.

Tonight has been one of the best nights of my life so far. I think I’ll go to bed today with this happiness lingering in my mind.

“Hey, Yuya-kun. Can I crawl in the night after all?”

Obviously not, Kaede.

## Chapter 48 A change of attitude...

Though it was a shame to leave her behind, I parted ways with Kaede and spent the night alone, and the final morning of the extracurricular camp arrived. The plan for the day was to visit the souvenir shop in the facility and leave after lunch.

“It doesn’t look like we have much time. Is there anything you want, Yuyakun?”

After leaving my luggage on the bus, I was just about to go shopping when Kaede asked me what I wanted to do. So I put my hand on my chin.

“Hmmm... I don’t think there’s anything I want yet. But it would be nice if I could buy something matching with Kaede.”

This was the place where I had told Kaede ‘I love you’, and where my dream had been fulfilled. It would be nice to have something to commemorate that. The best thing would be something that would remind me of last night every time I use it or see it. I don’t think this would be easy to find, but it will also be a fun memory for both of us to look for it.

“Well, I’m also just happy to leisurely look around with Kaede. Why don’t we just buy something if we both like it?”

“Again... I’m so glad that you’re saying that, because... I feel the same way!”

Then Kaede hugged me in her arms. With her smile as bright as the sun, I couldn’t help but feel my facial muscles relax.

“A, ah, I should buy something for your... family, shouldn't I? They've been so helpful to me, I should buy them something to thank them for their help...”

“Huhhh. It's okay, don't worry about it. But, yes, I think you should go with something safe like tea here. My father and mother both like tea, so I'm sure they'll love it.”

As this was a British-inspired establishment, there was a wide range of authentic teas. There was also a large selection of snacks, and while you might not like them, cookies would be fine.

“Well, if that's the case, let's hurry up!”

Kaede and I head to the souvenir shop with our fingers tightly intertwined in a lover's bond.

“Isn't there something different about Hitotsuba-san and Yoshizumi-kun? I'm not sure if it's the same as yesterday or the day before, but I think they've become even closer...?”

“Could it be that Yoshizumi has become more gentle, or perhaps Hitotsuba-san's aura of love is in full swing now?”

“What a good boyfriend... for him to care about a souvenir for Hitotsuba-san's parents. My boyfriend, on the other hand, is... haaa...”

I heard the sighs of the girls. What does it mean to be more gentle? I don't think I've changed at all.

I think they were right about feeling the distance being shortened. Not physically, but emotionally. Since I confessed my feelings to Kaede, I don't have any reservations about her anymore. Before confessing my feelings to her, I would have been nervous and hesitant when I held her hand, but now I can feel confident doing this. Still, I'm somewhat nervous, though.

But still, Kaede's aura of love was in full swing? I do love you and I don't have to hide this feeling from you, so I don't blame you if it was leaking out,

but I hope you get what I mean.

“Damn you... Yoshizumi’s a b\*\*\*\*\*d... for showing off being a ‘meotoppuru’ in the morning...!”

“You sprinkled that ‘meotoppuru’'s sweetness all over the place! S\*\*\*w you, you b\*\*\*\*\*d!”

“But look at that smile on Hitotsuba-san’s face! It’s the happiest, most radiant smile I’ve ever seen...! When she smiles like that, there’s no room for... anyone here...”

“I can’t handle it... that sugouple [TN: shugappuru = Sugar + Couple. I’m trying my best, right? Ah, the editor said yes. Yay!] is too sweet... urgh...”

As usual, the boys’ lamentations were terrible. I mean, there were a lot of other names out there besides ‘meotoppuru’, why that? Wasn’t there supposed to be multiple alternatives?

“Fufu. ‘Meotoppuru’ is quite strange to say, don’t you think? Well, we’re still a couple, but I’m sure we’ll be a married couple in the future, so it describes us perfectly.”

I never thought that Kaede would like this joke of a name. If they find out that it was approved by Kaede, it was going to be troublesome for sure.

“It’s fine. It’s proof that we’re in love. We’re more than just a couple, like Akiho-chan and Higure-kun!”

I had wanted to ask Kaede if she was fine with being called that, but if she approved of it, I guess it was okay. If she had made an unpleasant face here, I would have had to give Motegi and Sakaguchi, including Shinji, iron fist strikes, but she spared their lives.

“That’s not important! It’s time for some fun shopping, Yuya-kun!”

After that, Kaede and I enjoyed shopping until the very last minute.

I chose a pair of stuffed bears, one with a red hat and the other with a blue

hat, as a memento for the two of us. We decided to display them in the entrance hall. In addition, Kaede was going to buy a rather large stuffed animal. By the way, when I asked her why she wanted it, she answered with.

“... This is for me to hug it instead of Yuya-kun when you’re home late due to club activities or when I’m home alone and lonely. Is it bad?”

“That’s foully cute, so it’s not, Kaede.”

We ended up buying the stuffed animals and having them shipped to us. Kaede was in tears because she couldn’t bring it on the bus.

## Chapter 49 On the bus together on the way home

The bus ride home was even noisier than the one on the way there. Since we were only going home, everyone had a lot of energy and were talking about what had happened at the camp.

Incidentally, I felt a gaze on my back that was filled with a variety of emotions that I hadn't felt on the way to the facility. Why was that?

“Fufufu~. I'm so glad I got to sit next to Yuya-kun on the way home!”

As you can realize from these words, the reason was due to Kaede sitting next to me. I was sitting by the window and Kaede by the aisle. Shinji, by the way, was sitting alone on the other side.

The reason for this change was simple: We had spent too much time shopping.

By the time we'd finished picking out souvenirs for Kaede's parents and arranging the delivery of the stuffed animals, we were just about to assemble. In our haste, we forgot that we were holding hands and got on the bus of the class 1-4 together.

Out of breath, Kaede and I sat down on an empty seat as if it were a matter of course, but of course the homeroom teacher was appalled. However, since we didn't want to waste time trying to get Kaede back to her class, we decided to leave like that.

“It was fun, the extracurricular camp. Let's definitely go on a ski trip next

winter break! I want to ski again with you, Yuya-kun!”

“I guess so. It would be nice if we could ski more next winter. I’m sure Kaede can handle the more difficult courses, so show me something cool, right?”

She was so good at skiing that she took her family on a ski trip every year, and her skiing was so beautiful that I couldn’t help but admire it. Even her instructor was raving about her. I think I’ll bring my camera next time I go.

“If that’s the case, I’ll take lots of pictures of you too, Yuya-kun, okay? I have to take pictures of your cute face when you fall down and get embarrassed at any cost!”

No, don’t take a picture of me looking like a fool. If you’re going to take a picture of me, take a picture of me looking cool. Well, there was no moment of such in skiing.

“It’s fine. I think it’s really cool that Yuya-kun is trying so hard even though he’s not used to it. I love that about you, so shouldn’t I take this as a memorial?”

With a chuckle, Kaede put her head on my shoulder. There was no way I could say no to something like that, and besides, I couldn’t veto something like that with a sly smile on her face.

“Do what you want to, Kaede... There’s no way I can say no to you if you’re looking at me with that cute face... That’s foul play...”

I’d like to take a picture of that smile and set it as the wallpaper of my phone. That’s right, why don’t I just take an in-camera picture of her in this position?

“No, you can’t! Taking pictures on the bus is totally bad manners!! It’s bad manners! Bad manners!”

‘I said it twice because it’s important!’ Kaede spouted excuses while raising her head, but it was not true. If you look around, you’ll see that everyone is taking pictures of their own.



“If you want, I can take a picture for you. I think you’ll get a better shot that way.”

“What are you talking about, Higure-kun!?”

“Alright, I’m counting on you, Shinji!”

I tossed the phone to Shinji and rested my chin on her shoulder as I hugged Kaede from behind. Kaede’s face and ears instantly changed to the red color of autumn leaves.

“YU, YUYA-KUN!!??”

“Yes, cheese.”

“Wha!? Higure-kun!? You’re seriously taking this picture of this moment!?”

Well done Shinji! The way you pressed the shutter just in time to catch Kaede’s moment of surprise was just perfect! It couldn’t have been a cuter shot!

“I think I got a good shot of Hitotsuba-san’s panicked face. What do you think, Yuya-kun? Do you want me to take one more picture?”

“Let’s take another shot! I’ll get it right this time, so let’s do it again! It’s okay, isn’t it, Yuya-kun!?”

“Of course. Shinji, please.”

‘Yes, yes’, Shinji chuckled, setting up the camera again. I hugged Kaede tightly again. Unlike before, when she had been surprised by my surprise, Kaede leaned her body against me and let her head rest. Her face was still red, but very calm.

“Yes, cheese.”

In this second picture taken by Shinji, we looked very happy, if I might say so myself.

“Yuya-kun. Please send me this picture later, okay?”

Kaede said, a little embarrassed. ‘Of course’, I replied, stroking her again. Kaede’s mouth was pouting, but she seemed to be relaxed, and I couldn’t help but love that.

“Ahahahahaha... Help me, Akiho. I think I’m going to get diabetes...”

I pretended not to hear Shinji’s dry laugh.

# Chapter 50 What's the first thing you do when you get home

“Yuya! From now on, take it easy on me. I mean, pull yourself together! I’m dying of heartburn!”

“Oh... Shut up, Shinji. I just woke up from sleep and your voice is echoing in my head, so stop yelling...”

After a three-hour bus ride, we arrived back at the school safely. We immediately disbanded on the spot, but Shinji rushed at me and Kaede, who was still rubbing her sleepy eyes. I didn’t mean to do anything to upset you, okay?

“You... you can’t be serious, right...!? This...! You can’t just do this with no hesitation and expect nothing to go wrong! Do you think I won’t go crazy from being too naive to show it to you!?”

Bang! Shinji showed me the screen of his phone with a sound effect that sounded like something out of an anime. When Kaede and I looked at it, we saw a picture of the bus we had just been on, with Kaede’s head on my shoulder and me leaning against her as we slept.

“Shinji. It’s not good taste to take hidden pictures, okay?”

“Shut up! It’s a necessary evil to make you guys realize how destructive your ‘meotoppuru’ behavior is! What’s with the happy faces!? You were both breathing so sweetly! Do you know how I felt that I was on a different bus from Akiho!?”

No, I don't know. How am I supposed to know what I look like while sleeping or how I breathe in my sleep? Hey, Kaede, what's wrong? You're staring at the picture.

"Higure-kun. I want to keep this photo as a memory, so could you please send it to me right now? Yuya-kun looks very cute in this picture."

Kaede sighed in fascination. Well, I certainly think Kaede's face was very pretty in this picture. And while you're at it, send me this too, Shinji.

"Kuh... is this what the 'meotoppuru' is capable of? I can't believe that the photos don't upset you, but rather show how close you both are...!"

"Shin-kun. It's no use, let's give up. They've become two people we don't know anymore. They're more than a 'bakappuru', they're a 'meotoppuru'. Oh, I'll send it to Kaede-chan, and you, Shin-kun, send it to Yoshi!"

I patted him on the back, feeling a little sorry for his slumped shoulders. With an inaudible groan, Shinji sent me the photo. Thank you.

"Well, well. I guess it's time for me to go home. Let's go, Kaede."

"Yes. Well then, Akiho-chan, Higure-kun. See you at school."

Kaede and I walked home, hand in hand, with receiving the words of the older existing couple 'I wish you happiness.'

"Hey, Shin-kun. They really do look like a couple, don't they?"

"That's right, Akiho. I've got a hint of that since Yuya became honest with me, but I didn't think he'd change that much once he confessed and they officially became lovers. I don't know how much he loves Hitotsuba-san though..."

"That goes for Kaede, too, doesn't it? And there's that whole Yoshi-love-love aura going on. As sweet as strawberries. Good job, Shin-kun!"

"Thank you. Akiho. Let's go home too."

\* \* \* \* \*

On the way home. Thinking about what to make for dinner this evening.

By the way, there was frozen pork and some leftover kimchi left, so I could make a simple stir-fry with pork kimchi. What else should I add for Chinese soup? I guess that was what high school students check for when cooking.

“It’s just like you, Yuya-kun, not to eat out when you’re tired. You don’t have to force yourself, you know?”

“No, I just thought that if you can make it, it’s better to make it yourself as much as possible. We rarely ate out, so there are some leftovers.”

I had been in debt, after all. In order to cut down on food costs, I mainly cooked for myself. Even though Kaede’s parents were wealthy, she couldn’t be left on her own.

“So even if the environment changes, you won’t change the way you’ve been living. Huh. As expected of Yuya-kun. Or Sasuyu for short!” [TN: ‘As expected of Yuya-kun’ = ‘Sasuga, Yuya-kun’. Shorten it and you get ‘Sasuyu’.]

“Hey, Kaede. I don’t feel like I’m being praised at all, should I be happy?”

“Of course, I’m praising you! I’m looking forward to tasting Yuya-kun’s home-cooked meals.”

Let’s try our best to live up to Kaede’s expectations, shall we?

I went straight home without taking any detours. It was good to be home for the first time in two days, but for some reason, Kaede wanted to make me wait. What’s wrong?

“I’ll go in first, so Yuya-kun, please wait a little while before you come in. Yes, about ten seconds will be fine.”

“... Why are you acting in such a mysterious way?”

“Please don’t go into that! You can come in after ten seconds and say you’re home!”

After saying that, Kaede unlocked the door and dashed into the house as if running away. I wondered what she was going to do in this short time. I felt both excited and anxious.

“... I, I’ m back—”

Exactly ten seconds later. As instructed (?), I opened the door. [TN: The (?) is also in the raws.]

“Welcome home, Yuya-kun.”

Kaede was standing there smiling and held out her hands. Ah, I now get what you mean.

“I’m back, Kaede.”

I put my luggage in its place, took off my shoes, and approached her with my hands outstretched, too, and wrapped them tightly around her.

“Ehehe. I wanted to tell you ‘welcome home’, Yuya-kun. Was that a bad idea?”

“... How could it be? I’m so happy.”

As I was feeling the warmth of my favorite person, Kaede suddenly looked up at me. What’s wrong? Then, she kissed me faster than I could ask her.

“Oh, it’s a welcome home smooch. Come on, come on! Let’s change clothes first! Then we’ll cook dinner together!”

Kaede ran off to her bedroom, her face bright red. I was left alone in the doorway, dumbfounded.

“... Kissing is cheating, Kaede...”

I promised myself that in return, one day I would give her a goodbye kiss.

# Chapter 51 I want to make it up to you

We ate a quick dinner, accompanied by a movie available on the internet. At Kaede's request, we chose a mecha anime that had been revived as a theatrical movie after a 10-year absence. The story was about the hero, whose survival has been rumored during that time period, coming back to life and carrying out his last mission. New aircraft were also introduced, and it was just a very exciting work.

"Only those who prepared to be shot at were allowed to shoot. This is a very cool line..."

"I am surprised that Kaede is a fan of this work."

"The character designs were made by a manga artist I liked, so I thought I'd give it a try. Then I found it very interesting and got hooked. Do you like it too, Yuya-kun?"

Of course I do! It's one of my top 10 favorite anime. I like it so much I watch it on loop over and over again.

"I never thought I would be able to talk about my favorite anime with Yuya-kun. Then what is your favorite drama? I like—"

What started as a simple conversation, turned into a very enjoyable time. After I told Kaede that I liked her, I started wanting to know more about her. I wanted to see more of the different sides of Hitotsuba Kaede that only I know of. Is it selfish of me to think so?

“It’s nice to talk about these things once in a while. Oh, I have to take a bath soon, it will be late before I go to bed. What do you want to do? Do you want to go in with me today?”

“... Kaede. It’s not something to be said lightly...”

Of course I want to get in! I’ve been able to withstand the temptation with my steel self-restraint until I confessed my feelings for her, but when we officially became lovers, hugging and kissing left my self-restraint in shambles. I don’t know what would happen if I were asked to take a mixed bath at that moment! I understand that what I’m saying and what I’m thinking don’t match, but I can’t just nod my head.

But this day Kaede was different from usual. Normally, she would stick out her tongue and tease me saying, “I’m just kidding,” but tonight her face was red and she looked up at me and said.

“I’d like to take a bath with you, Yuya-kun. ... I’d like to soak in the bathtub while you hug me. I’m lonely because we had less time together than usual for two days. Besides...”

Kaede cut off her words there. I was also feeling lonely because we had less time to spend together. It made me happy to know that Kaede felt the same way. And I could probably guess what she was going to say next.

“I was really sad that I couldn’t be with Yuya-kun that night when he told me he loved me.”

Oh, I knew you were just like me. I was also disappointed that I couldn’t spend that night with Kaede. It was my fault, I was so focused on confessing under the stars that I didn’t think about what would happen afterward.

“Besides, ... that night, Yuya-kun said, ‘I’ll make it up to you when we get home’. You have to fulfill that promise!”

No, I did say I’d make it up to you, but! I did say that, but that’s mixed bathing, and I think that’s a little strange, Kaede!



“Or. Yuya-kun, do you not want to be... with me?”

“No, I don’t mind it!”

The only option was to be honest with her when she was looking at me with moist eyes! I’m embarrassed to admit it, but being able to bathe with Kaede was a man’s privilege, a privilege that only I am allowed! I’m not going to give it to anyone else!

“Ehehe. I did it! I’m going to take a bath with Yuya-kun! I’ll go get ready right away then!”

“Oh, ok. I’ll see you soon. I’ll take care of the dishes...”

‘Thank you’, Kaede said, and skipped off to the bathroom. Even though it was nighttime, the tension was at an all-time high. Even though she was in a happy mood, it was typical of Kaede that she carried the dishes she used to the sink.

“I agreed to it on the spur of the moment, but I don’t know if I can handle it...”

As I washed the dishes, I came back to myself and tried to think calmly, but it probably wasn’t going to work. I’ll just have to close my eyes and count the prime numbers to get by when the time comes.

Kaede came back to the living room, even though it was very late for her to wash the bath. I resumed watching the movie we had stopped halfway through, but my mind was already too occupied. With each passing moment, I prayed that the bath would not be ready.

But my prayers went unanswered, and I heard a light melody announcing the completion of the bath.

“Here we go! It’s time for a fun mixed bath, Yuya-kun! I’ll be on my way in a little while, so go ahead and soak in the tub. Oh, and don’t run away when I get in, like you did the other day, okay? Okay?”

“I know, I know... I’m not running away today. I’m going to be... ready for

that.”

Open up, me! We’re just taking a bath together! As long as I keep my eyes closed and my back to her, it won’t matter! As long as I don’t look directly at the naked body of the goddess, my reason won’t be blown away. I’ll be fine! I can get through this!

I washed myself carefully and opened the lid of the tub. I put in the bath salts that were placed in front of the door of the tub. The clear water in the tub turned cloudy white.

“Let’s see. I think I can manage this...”

It seems that Kaede wasn’t a baka. That was a relief. It was nice to be able to stretch my legs and take a bath after a long time.

“Yuya-kun. How’s the water temperature?”

“Ah..., it’s the best. Kaede, come quickly.”

“Okay, I’m coming. I’m coming.”

The door slowly opened with a squeaky sound. I swallowed my spit with a gulp.

“Sorry to keep you waiting, Yuya-kun.”

Kaede, with a towel wrapped around her body, stood there with her cheeks dyed red.

## Chapter 52 A man so naive that you want to tease him

Her skin was as white and fine as ceramic. Her slender legs were healthy with just the right amount of firmness. The twin mounds that pushed against the towel were really violently seductive and unreasonably fascinating. In addition, the way she wore her hair down in a bun looked fresh and cute.

“What’s the matter, Yuya-kun? Were you perhaps expecting me to be naked...?”

“Bw-bwah! No, it’s not like that!”

I deny it in the manner like some high school detective [EN: Detective Conan (Shinichi Kudo)] and turned my back on Kaede. In fact, the sight of her with a towel wrapped around made me more excited than the sight of her naked. It was because I was not able to gaze at everything that it seemed so profound, that I was glimpsing the depths of a woman’s beauty. No, what am I thinking?

“Fufu. How funny, Yuya-kun. Please wait a little while while I clean myself up.”

I listened to the sound of Kaede humming in the shower over my back as I waited for that moment. I could feel my heart jumping out of my mouth and my body tensing up. It felt like my heart was beating faster than when I had confessed my feelings.

“Uhm, Yuya-kun. I’d like to soak in the bathtub too, so I’m sorry, but can

you please move a little?”

“Yes, yes! I shall move!”

“Fufu. Why are you using honorific language? You’re really funny, Yuya-kun.”

‘Excuse me’, Kaede said, and slowly put her feet and sank her body into the bathtub. With the increase in volume, the hot water overflowed from the bathtub with a great force. This sounded like a waterfall that echoed in the quiet bathroom.

“Isn’t it hard for you to relax when you’re on the edge like that?”

“Oh, I’m fine here. I guess when you’re my age, this much space is enough to relax!”

Don’t turn around. The current Kaede was definitely the Kaede in her bewitching mode I never knew of. The towel clinging to her body was transparent. Her soft, steamy skin. Her hair was slightly wet from the shower. Droplets of water running down her chin from her forehead and falling on her beautiful collarbone. I feel like I’m going to explode just thinking about it.

“If Yuya-kun doesn’t come, I’ll go over there.”

“What...? Kaede, what are you saying—eh?”

Suddenly, I could feel Kaede’s moist skin on my back. Her arms were squeezed around my waist and her cheek was pressed against my neck. I was tickled by her breath. The plump, heavenly feeling was killing my rational mind.

“Hey, Yuya-kun. Why don’t you look at me? Could it be that... I’m not attractive?”

“What, what are you talking about!? Kaede is more than attractive enough for me! I don’t think I need to tell you that!”

“If that’s the case, look at... me. Hug me..., will you?”

I heard a soft unraveling sound and saw a bath towel floating softly in the bathtub. Hey, so that means that Kaede was now genuinely—

“Ah, Ka-Ka-Kaede... Then I’m... err...”

That’s right. If I close my eyes and quickly turn around, I can embrace the naked body of a goddess without looking her in the eyes. Instead, I would be able to feel the enchanted fruits all over my body, but I would have to be content with that. Okay, here we go—!

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry... I think that’s enough...! Yuya-kun, you’re too cute!”

Huh? What do you mean, Kaede?

“That’s because Yuya-kun reacted so naively. I wasn’t bullying you... I just wanted to tease you.”

“... Kaede.”

“I was nervous too, you know. But Yuya-kun’s heart was pounding dozens of times more than mine, and the way you were desperately trying to look away from me felt so teasing that I ended up being mean to you.”

She then wrapped the towel around her body again and pulled away from me. I repeatedly took deep breaths to calm my ragged breathing. My head started to feel fuzzy.

“How long are you going to keep looking back? Why don’t you stretch your legs and relax? I can give you a foot massage if you want. Or would you like me to hug you from behind and rub your shoulders again?”

Oh, what a fascinating proposition that seems. It’s just wonderful. But unfortunately, I don’t have enough time to enjoy them.

“I’m sorry, Kaede... I can’t... anymore...”

“Huh? Yuya, Yuya-kun!? Are, are you okay!?”

My consciousness went dark as I heard Kaede’s panicked voice in the

distance.

# Chapter 53 A Lap Pillow is a Man's Dream

I came to my senses while feeling a sensation on my head that I had never felt before.

I remembered that I took a bath with Kaede, and she hugged me from behind in the cloudy water while saying something about giving me a massage, but I couldn't remember anything after that.

“Ah! Yuya-kun, you're awake, aren't you? How's your body feeling?”

I was confronted with two hills in front of my eyes as Kaede's face peeked out from there, and her expression was that of a loving goddess. It seemed like I was lying on a bed in my bedroom. Why was Kaede's face right above mine? And this feeling, could it be that this was the legendary lap pillow of hers!?

“My head still hurts a little, but I'm okay now. More importantly, what is this situation...?”

I was happy to have a lap pillow, but also embarrassed, so I tried to sit up, but Kaede prevented me from doing so.

“Don't get up yet. Yuya-kun had fallen down in the bath. I was surprised when you suddenly jumped up. So you're going to be on my lap until I say it's okay.”

“I see... I'm sorry for making you worry about that. I'm sorry, Kaede.”

Kaede looked down at me while holding a paper fan as she replied, ‘No, it’s fine’. So, I collapsed in the bath, huh.

Hmm? Wait a minute. Of course, I was naked when I collapsed in the bath. But now I’m wearing my pajamas. Who put these on for me? No way...!

“So... I found out everything about Yuya-kun. I thought it was wrong for me to know about it, but it was an emergency, so I couldn’t stop it...”

Kaede replied shyly, blushing slightly. Seriously? Kaede changed my clothes? Did I literally expose everything to her? I feel so pathetic, I want to die.

“Yuya-kun’s body was so beautiful... so firm and yet soft. I really wanted to touch it a lot.”

“Hmm...? ‘Wanted to touch it’? Kaede, did you only see it?”

“Well, originally, it would have been better if I, as your lover, could have done everything, but as expected, it was impossible for me to rescue Yuya-kun from the bathtub, dress him, and carry him to bed by myself. It was both painful and regretful that I had to ask for help from Miyamoto-san.”

Kaede clenched her fists in frustration, saying it was the mistake of a lifetime. Well, if you ask me, a girl doesn’t have the strength to carry a high school boy in her arms. In a sense, it was inevitable that she would ask Miyamoto-san, the old butler who was a godsend, to come to her aid.

“Miyamoto-san did everything. I could only watch... what a shame.”

“No, that’s not a shame at all. In fact, can you please stop making up lies like it’s the truth? It’s bad for my heart.”

“In the end, I couldn’t see Yuya-kun’s body properly... oh, right! You still have a lot of heat in your body, don’t you? Why don’t you just take off your top? No, let’s take it off! Let me see it, please!”

“Wait, Kaede!? No! Stop it!”



‘Please don’t resist!’ said Kaede and grabbed me by the hem of my pajamas, desperately trying to restrain me and taking it off by grabbing my hand.

“Ugh. ... Here’s what I do to kids who resist!”

Kaede was so frustrated with me that she chose to press her bountiful fruits against my face. In the bath, I had felt the softness and elasticity on my back with my HP being drained.

And then I realized something. She wasn’t wearing anything under her pajamas. In other words, Kaede was now—

“All right! I’ll take my loss! You can do whatever you want, Kaede, just get away from me! Please! I beg you!”

“Hmm... fu... ah... fufu. It’s all right if you understand. Now if you’ll excuse me—”

As I pulled up the hem of my pajama, Kaede put her head on my stomach with a plop. I don’t know what she was happy about, but she squinted her eyes in satisfaction.

“Haa~... Yuya’s belly pillow is the best. Can I sleep like this?”

“... No.”

“Buh. Yuya-kun’s no good. If you lend me your belly for the night, you can use mine as a pillow tomorrow night. Or are you thinking that you want to bury your face somewhere else other than my stomach?”

Ahhh! The goddess of compassion turned into a devil with a bewitching smile, making me vomit blood in my mind, and I actually gulped.

“Kaede! What the h\*\*l are you talking about!?”

“Didn’t you get the message? It’s not my stomach, I’m talking about my breas—”

“STO—OP!! I won’t let you say anything else!”

In order to restart Kaede, who had gone into rampage mode, I slammed her head gently with my hand blade without any hesitation, making Kaede let out a cute ‘Ah’. I’m sorry. But I had no choice but to do this in order to bring you back to your senses.

“I won’t let my stomach be a pillow, nor do I want to use yours as a pillow. Instead, I’m thinking... Will this work?”

I gently approached Kaede, who was sitting down and holding her head, and hugged her. She let out a happy ‘Ah’, but this wasn’t the end. I held Kaede in my arms and rolled her over onto the bed.

“I’m not letting go tonight. Be prepared. Kaede.”

“Yes, yes..., I’m looking forward to it.”

Meek as a borrowed cat, her cheeks turned as red as an apple ready to be eaten, Kaede buried her face in my chest.

As soon as I got under the covers and closed my eyes while holding Kaede in my arms, I fell asleep.

“Ugh... Yuya-kun is still Yuya-kun even when he’s my boyfriend. His guard is too tight... No, if anything, did it get even tighter? What should I do...?”

What are you thinking about, Kaede? But I didn’t dare to dive deeper into it, and I let go of my consciousness into the dream.

## Chapter 54 Are you sulking

After all the fun, there always exists something painful waiting for us. Yes, after all the skiing and stargazing, what awaited us was the h\*\*l called the final exam. While there wasn't any problem with advancing to the next grade, that didn't mean we could let our guard down. If you want to gain enough points to qualify for the university entrance exam, every time you take a test, it becomes a critical moment, and I don't want to have to retest.

"I'm thinking of having a group study on the weekend to help me get through this difficult time of final exams, so, what do you think, Yoshi!?"

Lunch break. While we were eating lunch in the classroom, Otsuki-san suddenly suggested this proposal to me.

"Otsuki-san. Why are you asking me?"

Isn't it strange to ask only me? Oh, I see. You discussed it with Shinji beforehand and already informed Kaede about it in class.

Well, I agree that we should have a study session. I don't mind doing things quietly by myself, but it would be fun to get together and do things together once in a while. We can teach each other and deepen our own understanding.

"If I borrowed Kaede without asking Yoshi, he would be angry, right? 'You can't just take away my Kaede!' I was prepared to be told something like that, so I asked him!"

"I don't think I'd say that, no matter how much I... think about that... or, maybe, I would?"

“Answering like that proves you will say it, Yoshi!”

I enjoyed Kaede’s homemade lunch box while thinking to myself that Ohtsuki-san was as energetic as ever. That was a delicious egg roll.

“What about the place? I’m not sure if there are any seats available at the nearby library, and since we might make a bit of noise, it might disturb the other users.”

In Kaede’s mind, making noise was already a given. Hey, hey, hey, are you okay with such a study session? I have a feeling we’re going to end up talking and not studying.

“Then why don’t we do it at Yuya’s house...? I don’t think it would be a problem to make some noise at Yuya’s house, right?”

“Wait, Shinji. Doing it at home would only cause problems. There are a lot of other places to do it, like family restaurants and food courts.”

“Those two options are noisy places, you know? You can’t concentrate if you study in those places, can you?”

That’s true, but... If that’s the case, why don’t we go back to the beginning and use the library? I’m sure some luck is needed to get a spot, but a quick dash after school should do the trick.

“Then how about we gather at my house? It’s a big place, and of course no one will complain about the noise. Isn’t that fine, Yuya-kun?”

“Yes~s! You won’t complain if Kaede-chan gives us the green light, right, Yoshi?”

I see. So it was a set-up from the very beginning. She had asked Kaede’s permission beforehand, assuming that I would refuse. It seems to have been a seamless two-stage stance, just like the sword-biting technique of a certain manslayer. [TL: No idea who it refers to.] [EN: I am guessing it’s Zoro from One Piece.] She got me. I’ve been completely defeated.

“I’m not going to argue with you if Kaede is okay with it.”

“We got it!! Then this weekend we will have a study session at Kaede’s house!”

“Fufu. Then what would you like for lunch? I can make it if you ask me to.”

I sighed internally as I looked at Kaede, who seemed to be enjoying her conversation with the increasingly excited Ootsuki-san. The egg roll doesn’t taste so delicious anymore...

\* \* \* \* \*

It was that night.

“Yuya-kun, are you perhaps angry?”

Kaede asked me while I was washing the dishes. Am I mad at you? I didn’t mean to be at all, but why did you think that way?

“Because your expression has been a little moody since the middle of lunch break. Did you still not like the idea of having the study session here?”

“Hmm... no, it’s not that I didn’t like it. I think it will be fun to study with Shinji and Otsuki-san, and I’m looking forward to it because I’ve never done it before. But I don’t know. More than that, I wish I could study alone with Kaede.”

Naturally, the club activities would be closed during the exam period. That was how much more time I could spend with Kaede, and if I wanted, I could spend all my holidays with her. There was a part of me that regretted the loss of such precious time.

“I’m sorry, Kaede. I guess I’m a bit possessive after all...”

“Don’t worry about it, Yuya-kun. I’m rather happy about it. It’s the proof that Yuya-kun loves me.”

Kaede gave me a sly smile as I mocked myself, and then continued with her words, saying.

“I’m also very possessive, you know? I’m prepared to do whatever it takes to make sure we’re in the same class next year!”

“That sounds very encouraging. Well, what exactly are you thinking of doing?”

“Right... for starters, I’m going to bribe the headmaster—”

“Out! That’s totally out! Instead of doing that, let’s go ask God together!”  
[TN: By visiting a shrine.]

I was wondering what she was going to say, but she said it was a bribe! I thought Kaede was going to go in the direction of visiting a shrine, praying, or buying a good luck charm, but she was strangely realistic and graphic.

“Can I take that as an invitation for a date from Yuya-kun then!? That’s what it means, isn’t it!? When the exam is over, let’s go visit a matchmaking shrine, and on the way home, let’s go eat something delicious! That’s a promise, right!?”

‘Isn’t it nice!?’ Kaede said at the end, bringing her face close to mine as she leaned over the counter. I didn’t mean it like that, but there was no reason to refuse, so I nodded.

“I did it! Now I can study hard for my exams! I love you, Yuya-kun!”

As I leaned forward, Kaede unexpectedly gave me a surprise kiss. It was only for a moment, but our lips were definitely touching. My head froze.

“Ehehe. I’m going to take a bath. Yuya-kun, please take it easy. Or do you want to join me again...?”

“... Please take your time.”

“As for me, you’re always welcome. But I’ll leave you alone then. Thank you for washing the dishes.”

Kaede then went out of the living room to get ready for her bath. After I finished cleaning up, I sat down on the sofa and looked up at the ceiling.

“A surprise kiss is not fair...”

Feeling happy at the touch that lingered on my lips, I pondered how I should return the favor.

As a result of my thinking:

When I unexpectedly performed a good night kiss, Kaede froze and put her arms around my waist and we slept in a hug all night.

# Chapter 55 Study Session in the Love Nest

It was the weekend, and Shinji and Otsuki-san had come over to our house a little after 10 am. I was amazed at how many hours they were prepared to study, but I guess it would work out since we were going to lose our concentration after lunch anyway.

“Potato chips! Chocolate! And Coke! We’re all set! I’m ready to study!”

Otsuki-san’s tension was unnecessarily high as she laughed, and her partner Shinji was laughing too. Kaede also looked somewhat stunned like me. By the way, Kaede was wearing date glasses today. I had asked her why.

“Fufu. I was trying to give the impression of being a tutor. What do you think, does it look good on me?”

‘To put it mildly, it’s great,’ I replied. Kaede’s glasses made her seem more like a big sister, which was really nice. I want to be spoiled by her.

Oops, I’d better stop thinking about weird things now.

Kaede put a large amount of sweets that Otsuki-san brought, on a plate and placed it in the center of the table. Okay, this didn’t look like a study session, but rather like a snack party. I’m already starting to wonder if we’re really going to do one.

“Akiho. If you don’t take it seriously, you’ll be in trouble soon. Didn’t you just barely score a red on your final exam in the second semester?”



“It’s as Higure-kun says, Akiho-chan. If you don’t do well, you’ll have to skip lunch, right? I’ll also confiscate your snacks, so be prepared for that.”

“That’s not fair! The most exciting thing of the day is Kaede-chan’s cooking! You can’t take that away from me! It’s too cruel!”

I see. Otsuki-san’s grades weren’t as good as they seemed. Kaede had been in first place since she entered school, while Shinji and I were right in the middle or lower. But this time, my goal was to be in the top ten. Because I didn’t want to be ashamed of myself as Hitotsuba Kaede’s boyfriend.

“That’s too bad. Today’s lunch is not mine, but Yuya-kun’s homemade lasagna. If you don’t study, I’ll eat your portion as well, so consider that.”

“Yoshi’s homemade...? No way, Yoshi can cook!? And lasagna is quite a fancy dish...”

Lasagna was not that difficult to make. I just used the leftover meat sauce I made for spaghetti, and the white sauce was easy to make by buying a can of cheese and mixing it with milk. All you had to do was to alternate the sauces between the noodle doughs and the preparation was done. Bake it in the oven and it’s ready.

“It’s the special lasagna that Yuya-kun woke up early to prepare, you know? I really want to have it all to myself, but I’m trying my best to hold back. What do you mean you don’t want it? I’ll get angry, Akiho-chan!”

Kaede’s anger at Otsuki-san for trying to skip my studies has turned into anger at her for planning to not eat the lasagna I made. Well, Otsuki-san didn’t say anything about not eating it.

“I want to eat it! I want to eat Yoshi’s special lasagna! That’s why I’m going to study hard!”

“Good. Well then, I’d better get started. I’ll take care of Akiho-chan, so Yuya-kun and Higure-kun, please proceed as you please. If there’s anything you don’t understand, just ask, okay?”

“Thank you, Hitotsuba-san. Take care of my Akiho.”

Shinji bowed his head as if he were a parent entrusting his daughter to a skilled tutor. If she can't study just as well as us athletics, she'll be a tough opponent, but I guess Kaede-sensei can handle it. I wish I could have Kaede sensei as my tutor.

“Fufu. I'll be giving Yuya-kun a special lesson tonight, so please look forward to it, okay?”

My heart shot out of my chest by Kaede's words, who lifted her glasses and smiled seductively. I'm going to die of hyperventilation.

“Here we go again... Shin-kun, are you alive? By the way, I might not make it.”

“Akiho... Let's hang in there. I'll do my best to endure it. If you're in the same class as the two of them next year, you're going to have to deal with this all the time. From now on... get used to it... and...”

I don't care what the two of them are mumbling. I'll take Kaede's special guidance as a reward for studying hard!

# Chapter 56 Have you been studying

“I can’t go on... anymore. Impossible. I can’t do it...”

“I didn’t think you’d make it this far...”

Otsuki-san was propped up on her desk, completely burnt out with her soul leaving. Meanwhile, Shinji muttered the famous line of a certain FBI agent while looking up at the ceiling. [TL: No idea who.] [ED: Also no idea.]

The time was now past 5:30 pm. We took a break every now and then, and sometimes we had to stop to chat, but I think we made good progress in our studies. The lasagna I served for lunch was well received by everyone, including Kaede, and earned three approvals. Kaede’s comment, ‘It’s really delicious’, was the most delightful feedback.

“Good work, both of you. It’s nice to get together and study like this. Shall we do it again tomorrow?”

It would be a shame to lose my alone time with Kaede, but I had to be patient in order to get a good score on the exam. At first, I wasn’t in the mood for a study session, but when I saw someone else around me concentrating, I naturally felt more focused, so it wasn’t a bad environment.

Shinji, however, shook his head helplessly.

“We’re already groggy from Yuya and Hitotsuba-san’s occasional newlywed display. That’s the ‘meotoppuru’ for you. If we have to see this every day, we’ll probably die young. Is it diabetes that will kill us?”

What the h\*\*l was he talking about? I couldn’t tell, but Otsuki-san, who

looked up at me unsteadily, nodded her head.

“Yoshi washed the dishes as if it was a matter of course, and Kaede-chan carefully arranged the washed dishes in the dryer. I even wondered if you two really were our classmates. You would occasionally look at each other and start communicating about your relationship in silence, which was so sweet I almost threw up...”

Is that so? There were many times when I looked up and my eyes met Kaede’s, but we didn’t talk about love, did we? Well, I admit that I was staring at her with the feeling of ‘I love you, Kaede’.

“I don’t think Yoshi noticed because he was concentrating so hard. But Kaede-chan was staring at Yoshi the whole time while you were solving the problem. She had a very mesmerized look on her face. I could hear the voice in her mind saying, ‘Oh, Yuya-kun, you look so cool when you’re concentrating’.”

Seriously? I didn’t notice that at all. Kaede, were you watching me the whole time?

“Aaaahhhhhhhkiho-chan!? It’s not like I was gazing at Yuya-kun with such intentions, you know!? I mean, what’s with that voice in my mind!?”

“So what was Kaede-chan thinking when she stared at Yoshi? And she didn’t seem like keeping up with your studies?”

Kaede was playing the role of a teacher today, so it was not surprising that she didn’t make much progress in her own studies. By the way, Kaede had a foundation of daily preparation and review, so she shouldn’t face as much trouble as we do. But, I don’t care about that. What was important was the reason why Kaede was watching me.

“—I thought you were cute.”

“What did you say? I couldn’t hear the first part very well, so I want you to say it again. You didn’t hear her either, did you, Yoshi?”

“Ah, yeah. I couldn’t hear you well at the beginning because you were too quiet. Kaede, can you repeat it for me, please?”

“U~uh... because you were so cool! I was mesmerized by the serious expression on Yuya-kun’s face because he looked so cool! Is it not okay!?”

Kaede’s face turned red as she slammed the table and yelled at us. Otsuki-san, who had been stirring up the crowd, was surprised by her fierce reaction, Shinji laughed bitterly, and I felt embarrassed and turned around to face the opposite direction.

“The person you love has an expression on their face that he doesn’t usually show, you know!? It’s inevitable that I can’t help but be awestruck! So it’s no wonder that I stared at him, and the moment our eyes met, I muttered in my heart, ‘I love you, Yuya-kun!’”

Kaede was going into a rampage mode. This was a dangerous fellow who needed to be stopped. Otsuki-san, do something quickly! This was a silent plea of mine. Since you were the one who put us in this situation in the first place, shouldn’t you take responsibility?

“To begin with! Weren’t there times when Akiho-chan was staring at Higure-kun and stopped moving her hands? Did you think I wouldn’t notice? She was staring at Higure-kun with a very cute and devoted face. I don’t want to be bothered by that kind of Akiho-chan!”

“Ka-ka-ka-Kaede-chan!? I, I wasn’t staring at Shin-kun or anything—”

Kaede and Otsuki-san were excitedly arguing with each other. It wasn’t easy for the two men to intervene in this situation. Now, what to do?

“Hahaha. I think it’s best to leave it alone. I think it’s best to just let it go. If you interfere, it will only cause a fire. If you still want to stop it, there aren’t many ways to do so, okay?”

“... I know that when you try to look cool, it’s usually when you’re thinking about something stupid, but let’s hear it if it’s worth it.”

So, Shinji proposed a forceful power move that couldn't be called a strategy. It was very embarrassing to do it at the same time as Shinji, but it was the only way to calm them down, said 'strategist' Shinji. I took a deep breath and prepared myself. I moved quietly and made eye contact with him. Okay, let's go!

Operation Intervention is a go!

# Chapter 57 A Kissing Flood After the Executed Mission

There were three important points in Shinji's plan.

First of all. I was going to position myself behind Kaede and Shinji was going to position himself behind Otsuki-san. At this time, the two people who were preoccupied with arguing must never notice. This was because the element of surprise was very important in this strategy.

The second thing was to get the timing right. You can't be ahead of or behind the other. It was also important to do it at the same time and in the same breath.

And last. This was the most important point, and that was to wrap it up gently above all else. Hold her gently, with all your feelings, and then whisper in her ear!

"Akiho. I understand how you feel. But let's end it there and get ready to go home."

"Kaede's feelings have been fully conveyed to me. Thank you. So let's end it here, shall we?"

We hugged each of our loved ones who were face to face with us from behind and forcibly pulled them apart. How did it work? Kaede and Otsuki-san, who had been so noisy, became quiet like borrowed cats.

"Yu, Yuya-kun..."

I've understood Kaede's thoughts more than enough. Thank you. I love you. I patted her on the head with that thought. If it had been just me and Kaede, I would have said it out loud, but I didn't want to embarrass myself in front of Shinji and the others.

"Ehehe..... I like to be stroked by Yuya-kun. Please pet me more!"

"Fufu. I understand. I'll stroke you a lot."

Kaede showed a happy expression on her face. Yes, very cute.

"I don't know. I feel like I've lost by a large margin..."

"Shin, Shin-kun, you're one thing, but Yoshi might be even more so... The destructive power of Kaede-chan's dere face is also just too much.

I wanted to keep hugging and nudging Kaede until she felt satisfied, but it was forced to an end when Shinji and Otsuki-san said they were leaving.

Soon after that. When I finished sending off the two who looked somewhat discouraged, silence returned to our house, which had been an extraordinary space of a noisy but fun study session. As I sat down on the sofa, I felt exhausted.

"Oh, ....., what should we prepare for dinner? I didn't think of that."

"There is still some meat sauce left from Yuya-kun's cooking, so shall we make spaghetti again tonight? I'm totally fine with that, okay?"

"Really? Sorry for doing this two days in a row, but I think I'll make spaghetti again today. I will go to boil some water..."

"I'll do it. But first, I have to reward Yuya-kun for his hard work."

Is that the special instruction you were talking about this morning!? You're giving it to me at this time? But what the h\*\*l are you doing?

"Fufu. Well, you know... Here's what I mean."



Smiling, Kaede acted. What a surprise! She climbed up on me who was sitting on the sofa. You can't do that, Kaede! And not only did she straddle me, she put her arms around my neck like a koala.

“How about a special lesson for the night: ... to practice kissing?”

She whispered in my ear and bit me sweetly. An electric current ran through my body in surprise and inexplicable pleasure.

“Fufu. You're so cute when you flinch. Hey, Yuya-kun. Let's kiss..., can we?”

There was no reason to refuse the alluring invitation. I swallowed my spit nervously and then kissed Kaede. Normally she would have pulled away immediately and that would have been the end of it, but now Kaede was holding me tightly and I couldn't escape. She repeated the light kiss over and over again, pecking the tip of my lips like a bird.

This wasn't good. I felt so happy that I couldn't think about anything else, and my brain was melting. My body was overheating and I felt like I was floating in the air.

“Ha~a... nnh... fufu. It's nice to kiss in this way, again and again. I'm really thrilled because I feel that Yuya-kun wants me.”

“I also feel... very excited and dizzy, Kaede...”

“But that's about it for today! I'll prepare dinner for you, so you can relax, Yuya-kun. My mind can't take much more of this...”

I couldn't hear the last part because she was mumbling.

Kaede slowly got up from on top of me and headed for the kitchen. I stared after her with a fuzzy mind.

But still, what a terrifying special instruction it was. I was convinced that I would probably turn into a wolf if I were given this kind of instruction again.

No, the real wolf is not me, but Kaede, isn't it?

## Chapter 58 Ill Wash Your Back

For some reason, Kaede was smiling even more than usual when we were eating or watching TV. I, on the other hand, was so overwhelmed by the rain of kisses I had just received that just staring at her mouth was enough to give me heart flutters.

I resumed studying, but my brain was not working at all. The hand that grasped the pen froze every few minutes on its own, and I sighed every time I tried to concentrate.

“Are you okay, Yuya-kun? Your face is red.”

“Oh, it’s nothing. I feel kind of tired, so I’m going to take a bath to refresh myself.”

What a joke. Whose fault did you think it was that my face is turning red? It was all because Kaede suddenly straddled me and kissed me a lot. Well, a soak in the bathtub alone should help a little.

“Oh! Then can I join you? I’ll wash your back after a hard day of studying!”

Kaede made a snarky suggestion while clenching her fists. I really don’t know what was wrong with her today. She has been so aggressive, I feel dizzy thinking that she has really become a wolf.

But even if I were to shyly decline the offer, I knew what Kaede would do next. Just before I take off my clothes and go into the bathroom, she was going to attack me. She would make fun of me for being upset and tease me. I won’t let that happen.

“... Yeah. It’s not bad to have Kaede wash my back. If that’s the case, why don’t we take a bath together? Let’s do that since we have worked hard together.”

“— Eh? Yu-Yuya-kun!?”

Hehehehe. I’ve dealt a critical hit! And it was very effective! It was like a super effective type attack against her, dealing quadruple damage, and combined with a critical hit, that cut Kaede’s HP down to 1! [TN: A pokémon reference.]

“Here. If you want, let’s go to the bathroom together, Kaede. Do you want me to not only wash your back, but also take off your clothes?”

“No, no, no! I can take off my clothes by myself! I was just surprised that Yuya-kun nodded his head! I thought for sure you would say no...”

Look at that. It was just as I expected. Kaede was indeed a strategist, deliberately making a proposal on the premise that I would be flustered and refuse. But don’t think it will work so many times.

“What would you have done if I had refused?”

And it was time for the all-important answer. Now, since things didn’t go according to her own plan what was Kaede’s strategy with her cheeks turned red and her mouth pouted cutely as she received a counter from me!?

“That, of course! I was going to charge right before Yuya-kun went into the bathroom! Ah, I would have taken off my clothes in the bedroom beforehand and put on my bathing suit to charge at you! I’ve already made the preparations for that!”

I guess I was half right and half wrong. I didn’t expect her to wear a swimsuit instead of a bath towel. The last time I saw you, you were completely naked. I mean, when did you prepare a bathing suit? Even though it’s March, it’s still far from swimsuit season.

“Fufufu. Naive. How naive, Yuya-kun. It is true that I have not yet bought a

new bathing suit to go to the pool or the beach with Yuya-kun this summer, but I prepared one for such occasions. I'm sure this will please Yuya-kun!"

Oh. That's a lot of confidence. I wonder what kind of swimsuit it is. Maybe it's the swimsuit she wore last summer? I don't know what kind of swimsuit it is, but whatever Kaede would be wearing is sure to be cute! I'm curious!

"That's exclusively – for – you – to see! Come on, let's go!"

Casually, Kaede crossed her arms around me. Her spirit led me to the bathroom like a brave warrior making a raid on the Demon King's castle.

Then, suddenly. I realized something. Is it confirmed that we're going in together?

# Chapter 59 Swimsuit Plues

## Hospitality Equals Dangerous

Let's say it was a good thing that Kaede and I ended up taking a bath together again. The only thing I need to be careful of was to prevent passing out like last time, but I'm confident that I'll be fine today.

Why is that? Because Kaede would be wearing a bathing suit this time. She had worn a bath towel to hide her nude body, which had always attracted the gaze of all mankind, young and old, men and women, and my thought process was short-circuited when she took it off unexpectedly and came into close contact with me, but not this time. Since it was not the same now, I'm sure this would be fine.

In addition, there was a paper bag that Kaede had handed me at my feet as I was undressing in the changing room. What a surprise! It was a brand-new men's swimsuit. According to Kaede, it was Miyamoto-san who had prepared it. He told her that if she ever had a mixed bath again, she could use it.

I was filled with gratitude for this unexpected parting gift. Now I can stand proud in front of Kaede. I also had no complaints about the design. The trunk's type was above the knee length with a simple design of a summery picture of palm trees in black on a white background. I think these were useful for both land and water.

As expected of Miyamoto-san. He knows what he's doing. Yes, they're also very comfortable.

Satisfied with the perfect fit, neither too tight nor too loose, I stepped into the battlefield. However, Kaede was still changing her clothes. I waited for Kaede's arrival while adjusting the shower temperature since we were going to have a back scrub.

“Yuya-kun! Thank you for waiting!”

“No, I didn't wait long at all- Kaede!? What's with the outfit!?”

Kaede nods her head as if to say, ‘Is there something wrong with that?’ No, there was nothing wrong. But the destructive power was terrifying. The tight design of the navy blue monochromatic color clearly emphasized the curves of her body, so Kaede's outstanding style stood even more out. Her chest in particular looked amazing. No matter how stretchy the fabric was, wouldn't it rip if it wasn't the right size? In addition, the logo ‘Hitotsuba’ shining brilliantly on her chest created a sense of immortality. Is this the legendary—

“Fufu. What do you think, Yuya-kun? This is the school swimsuit that I used last year... Does it suit me?”

Kaede asked me while slightly looking down, then looking up and squirming her body. Oh, what a cute girl. I want to hug her right now.

“Of course, yes! You're so cute!”

Within those three years of junior high school, I had seen that swimsuit every year. I didn't think much of it at the time, but when I entered high school, I realized how much I appreciated it, especially, when it was the person I love who was showing it off in front of me. In my heart, I put my hands together.

“I'm so glad you said that! I wasn't sure if Yuya-kun would be happy, but Miyamoto-san said, ‘Yoshizumi-sama will be absolutely delighted. Be confident.’, so he pushed me to do it. I should thank him!”

Miyamoto-san! You are really the best!

“Well then, I'll give you a quick back massage! Please sit down on the chair.”

Kaede quickly moved a chair from the edge of the bathroom. I sat down, feeling a bit light-headed and strange. Kaede hummed a tune as she turned on the shower water and slowly poured it over my back.

“How’s the water temperature? Is it too hot?”

“No, it’s fine. It feels good.”

“Oh, really? I’m glad to hear that. Now, I’ll start scrubbing your back!”

I smiled and waited for the moment, hoping that she would wash me gently. She put some of her usual body wash on a towel, lathered it up and rubbed it over my body with a gentle hand, from my shoulders to my waist. Eh, she doesn’t use a towel?

“Shoo... shoo... what’s wrong?”

“No, no. It’s nothing. It’s just... it’s not quite what I was expecting...”

“Fufu. I get it. I knew that Yuya-kun would say that. Yuya-kun, you are as chubby as you look.”

What? What do you mean? I was just surprised that you took the trouble to rub the foam in your hands, because I thought you were just going to wash me with a towel, you know? Why do you call me ‘chubby’? Hey, Kaede. I can see it in the mirror, but why are you putting foam on yourself? Could it be that you—!

“I’ll use... my~... body to wash Yuya-kun’s bo-dy~...”

She put her arms around me from behind and held me close, whispered in my ear and bit my earlobe sweetly. That was a special combo from Kaede! But what’s this!? The wetness of the water and the natural fruits of Kaede’s body massage made me feel so happy and relaxed, but it will also make me faint!

“Shoo... shoo... Yuya-kun..., does it feel good?”

“Y-yes. It feels really good.”

“That’s... good. Then... I’ll make you feel good a lot, okay?”

Don’t whisper any more in a lusty voice. The sound of the foam, Kaede’s lustrous breath, body heat, and the softness and elasticity of her natural sponge. My body was sensitive to all of this, and it stimulated my brain.

“What’s the matter, Yuya-kun? It’s so cute that you’ve lost your mind. I’ll continue to wash.... the front as well then, okay?”

“... Eh?”

I was too dizzy to think, so I didn’t know what she meant. She smiled gently, picked up a towel that still had plenty of foam on it, and began to wash my chest with it, pressing her body against my back.

“Wait, don’t worry about the front, Kaede! I can wash myself!”

“Don’t be shy, okay? Please leave everything to me.”

The sound of Kaede’s seductive voice hit my ears. The towel was moving in a circular motion, and I was slowly covered in foam from my chest to my navel. Kaede’s breath was getting more and more ragged as she moved her arms harder and harder, and the feeling of the twin mounds squeezing against me made my body relax.

“Does it feel good? Now let’s move on to the feet.”

Moving forward, Kaede rubbed and washed my feet with the towel filled with foam. If she had used her body even more, I would have gone crazy for sure. When she finished washing me up to my knees, she switched to the shower and washed the foam off my body. It was a blissful moment as all the toxic buildup in my body, not just the dirt, flowed away with the bubbles. I sighed in relief.

“What’s wrong? Did it feel good? Would you like me to do it again?”

“Oh... that felt so good. Thank you, Kaede. I wish I could do this every day...”



“I see. If you want, Yuya-kun, I can do it... every day, okay?”

A soft blow of sweet breath made me jump up from my chair. Did I just say I want you to do this every day? My thoughtless actions are scary.

“Then Yuya-kun, please take a bath first. I’ll have a quick wash before I go in.”

“... Wait a minute, Kaede. This is not what we agreed on, you know?”

This time, with an ‘Eh?’, Kaede was surprised. I took Kaede by her shoulders and gently made her sit down on the chair. In my hand, I had the body towel that was used a while ago.

“D-don’t tell me that Yuya-kun wants to...?”

“Yes, that’s right, Kaede. Now it’s my turn to wash your back.”

Now, this was my stage! But only as long as I could stay rational!

# Chapter 60 Wash in Difficulty Mode

## Normal

Kaede was in her school swimsuit with her shoulders hunched and squirming. Despite sitting on a chair, she looked somewhat uncomfortable. Well, you're tasting what I felt a few minutes ago.

I took a generous handful of body wash and slowly rubbed it on her shoulders, just like Kaede had done for me. While the swimsuit was a junior high school swimming costume, it was completely exposed from the neckline. I think it was not just the steam that was causing the beautiful ceramic skin to glow red.

After her back had been thoroughly covered in foam, the arms were washed. This was done carefully from the arms to the fingertips, replenishing the foam as necessary. The arms were nice and fleshy to the touch, but:

“Ah, you're touching my arms too much... it's embarrassing.”

She asked me to stop in a cute voice with 120% embarrassment, so I decided to carefully wash her beautiful white fish-like fingers one by one. [TN: 'fish-like' is a compliment.]

“Fufu. Somehow, it feels nice.”

Once that was done, it was time to move on to the feet, which proved to be a very formidable challenge since they were Kaede's raw feet. This was the first time I had ever touched Kaede's feet directly, which was natural since she was taking a bath. Not too thin, not too thick, just the golden balance of

both legs. I started with her toes as well as her feet.

“Mmm... that tickles...”

I finished washing the soles of my feet while listening to Kaede’s muffled voice, and then moved on to washing her calves and thighs.

The first step was to slowly rub up and down from the ankle to the calf. The calves were also known as the ‘second heart’, as they functioned as a pump to bring back the blood accumulated in the legs against gravity, to the heart. That was why keeping the muscles here soft would improve the circulation of blood and reduce swelling and coldness. And that was why I’m totally not rubbing Kaede’s calves just to feel her plump calves! Absolutely not!

“Nnh~... Rubbing like that... it feels kind of good...”

Using a cat’s hand with the fingertips curled up, I started from the bottom and worked my way up. If I were to rub too hard, it would just hurt, so I adjusted it while watching her reaction. Yes, Kaede seems to be comfortable at this level. After about 30 seconds of this, it was time to move on to the thighs.

However, this was a very difficult thing to look at. Of course, her chest was also a bomb to be handled with caution as it felt like it was about to tear the breast area of the swimsuit apart, but her thighs created the so-called V-line area. They were like a super enchanted weapon that could turn my reasoning into charcoal in an instant.

That was why I told myself that I was just a massage robot that could heal Kaede’s fatigue, and I mindlessly performed the treatment.

My hands were also in the shape of a cat’s hands. While moving from the inside of the thigh to the outside, I rubbed the thigh in an upward motion to push the blood flow. The time for this was also 30 seconds.

“Nnh~... ah... Nnh~. Yuya-kun, you’re so good. It feels so good...”

Is this on purpose!? Are you deliberately leaking out such a charming voice!? Are you trying to destroy my consciousness by leaking those cute little

breaths on purpose while I'm already giving you a mindless massage!?

"Yuya-kun, you're wrong, okay? It's that it's such a nice massage. Even if I try to hold back, my voice will leak out on its own..."

Calm down. Calm down, me. First of all, take a deep breath to control your raging heart. Swoosh, hah. Okay, I'm okay now. If the thigh massage is the boss, then the part I'm about to wash is even stronger than that.

Exactly, it was that part. Kaede's front, the heavenly fruits that were filled with the dreams and hopes of men. I'm going to wash them too, which had grown to the point where it was almost leaking out of the highly elastic fabric of her school swimsuit.

But then I realized that I was making a fundamental mistake. That's right, it doesn't matter that I'm washing them through the school swimsuit.

"Fufufu. That's right. It doesn't matter if I'm wearing a bathing suit, right? Then.... you can wash both the back and front, right?"

You'd rather wash them, right? Kaede's words did not reach my ears. To be precise, my understanding was lapsed by what was happening in front of my eyes. Because...

"Once again, will you wash my back? After that, please make sure you... do the front as well, okay?"

Kaede took off half of her school swimsuit, revealing her white porcelain skin. Now I can wash her back and front properly! No, that's not it. I was so embarrassed that I couldn't help but look away.

"What's wrong? I washed Yuya-kun's back and chest with all my heart, you know? Then, will you wash my back and chest, Yuya-kun? Don't you want to touch it...? I want you to touch me, Yuya-kun..."

Kaede appealed in a sorrowful voice. I gulped down my saliva and made up my mind. Fortunately, the mirror in front of me was fogged up with steam. So, I'll just wash over her back. If I put my hands behind her back to hug her

as Kaede had done before, I should be able to wash her without seeing her directly.

“... Okay. I’ll go wash... it then.”

Taking the foam in my hand, I gently rubbed her back again. The fresh skin was so feverish as if almost burning.

After a moment, the next step was to rub the shoulders with moderate force, focusing on the shoulder blades. I had been sitting in a chair all day, studying. So I know it loosens up the hard and tense muscles.

“Yuya-kun is a really good massage therapist... It feels so good, I want you to do it every day...”

“... I’ll do it every day if you don’t mind, but before bed instead of in the bathroom.”

“Is that true? Can I ask you to do it again tomorrow?”

“Okay. Then tomorrow I’ll rub your lower back, which I can’t do here.”

‘Thank you very much!’ Kaede said happily. But before we can face tomorrow, I have to get over today’s ancient horse first.

“So, Kaede then. I’m going to wash your... front too...”

“Yes, thank you very much. Please be gentle with me... if you can?”

“I know, I know. I’ll be as gentle as I can...”

Just listening to this conversation, it sounded like I’m doing something very immoral, but in fact I was just washing Kaede’s body, you know!? I could almost hear Shinji’s ‘tsking’ that it was still a lot of work.

Foam refill! Let’s go. This is the last wash (final battlefield)!

# Chapter 61 Wash in Difficulty Hard

## Extra Stage

I gulped down my spit and thought desperately about how to conquer the impregnable Kaede Castle. How can I reduce the number of contacts and fulfill my mission to wash the body? Like some kind of coordinator, I turned my mind to maximum efficiency and came up with the best solution. Okay, let's do this.

“Well then..., I'll go wash them.”

Try to stay calm. Start with the abdomen area, focusing on the navel. Start at the belly button and rub your arms in a slow, circular motion.

When I touched her like this, I realized once again that there was no such thing as being careless with Kaede's body. Her body was soft, supple, and elastic. It made me want to put my head on her stomach and feel her smoothness. I'm sure it would feel good.

After finishing the navel area, the next massage was on her armpit. But the moment I touched it, Kaede's voice of anguish leaked out of her mouth.

“Yu-Yuya-kun! J-just a quick touch on the armpit is fine! You don't have to do it so carefully!”

‘Hyah!’, squeaked Kaede in a cute voice. I see. I understand now.

“Yu-Yuya-kun!? Haha, yy armpits are... hiyau~! I'm weak. Haha, no, please don't!”

Kaede wiggled her body while laughing. As expected, Kaede's weak point seemed to be her armpit. Her reaction was so cute that I couldn't help but be mean to her. I poked and prodded her. Every time I did that, Kaede's voice would rise up in a lusty tone. It's going to become a habit.

"Yu-Yuya-kun! Please, that's enough! Oh, I'm... hiya~an! I'm going to be angry! I will, okay!?"

"Eh—? What will you do when being angry? Will you tickle me too? But too bad. I have a strong armpit, so I won't lose to tickling, you know?"

"No, I won't! I'm not going to tickle you! Instead, I'll do this!"

Before I could ask her what she planned on doing, Kaede turned around and hugged me. I could directly feel the texture of her plump and plush cushion. There was so much information that my brain was on the verge of heating up.

"It's your fault, Yuya-kun. I told you to stop, but you kept tickling me..."

"I get it. I'm sorry I got carried away. I apologize, but first, let's move away for a while, okay? Okay?"

"I don't want to! If I pull away, Yuya-kun will tickle me again!"

"No tickling! I promise not to tickle you, so get away from me!"

"I don't want to. I want to cuddle with Yuya-kun. And even if I leave you, Yuya-kun won't wash my body properly. So..."

Kaede twisted in her embrace and picked up the body soap. What on earth was she going to do? When I was thinking about it, she spun the cover around and opened it, and then proceeded to drape the soap all over her b\*\*\*\*\*s.

"Kaede! You can't do that! No, this situation itself is already bad in many ways, but that's really bad!"

"Why is that? I think if I drop this in and scrub it, it will foam and clean...?"

“No! No! Absolutely not! Even if Kaede doesn’t move, I’ll wash you properly!”

I pulled Kaede off and spun her around to sit on the chair at the same time. Then, using my basic and ultimate weapon, I supplied the towel with body soap and regenerated the foam. I spread it out and covered Kaede’s two melons with it. Then I gently scrubbed her from side to side using the towel to prevent pain, and washed her bottom as well.

Hahaha! It was so easy! Now I can wash Kaede’s body without touching her directly. But why do you puff up your mouth like a blowfish and look at me in protest, Kaede? Did I do something wrong?

“... Yuya-kun’s a jerk. No will.”

It was strange. I didn’t get why I was being abused by Kaede when I washed her well. I don’t understand.

“Yes, that’s it. I’m going to give you a shower to rinse off the foam, so please stay still until the end.”

Nevertheless, the defeat of the Demon King was now complete.

I poured hot water over her back to wash away the bubbles. Kaede let out an indescribably delightful ‘ahhh’ sound. I’m sure it was a natural expression of the inexpressible happiness I felt as well.

I finished washing her body thoroughly, and now I could finally soak in the bathtub. But first, there was something I had to do.

“Kaede, make sure you fix your swimsuit properly, okay?”

I don’t want to soak in the bathtub with Kaede in her half-naked goddess state with her school swimsuit stripped off. You don’t have to tell me why. I’m already at my limit in many ways. Please don’t make me say it.

“... I-I know, you see? Please wait a moment while I get dressed again.”

Kaede, what’s going on in the meantime? Also, the fact that you’re whistling



while you're re-dressing means that you were probably planning to come straight in if I didn't point it out! Isn't that right!?

“Well, there's no way that can't be true. Ahahahaha.”

“... Thank you for your honest answer.”

With a sigh of exasperation, I sank into the bathtub and stretched out my legs as much as I could. Oh, I couldn't wait to feel when all the fatigue from the day was gone.

“Well then, I'll also go in then. Haahh~”

Kaede, who was now properly wearing her school swimsuit, also quietly dropped her back into the bathtub. The hot water flowed out with a bang. But that was not the point. The problem was—

“Hey, hey... Kaede? It's a big bath, why did you come here?”

Kaede forced me to spread my legs and sat between them. It was a large bathtub, so why bother coming to a small place when you could sit face to face and stretch out your legs!?

“Of course, that's because I want Yuya to hug me from behind, right? Can't you?”

“It's not that there's anything wrong with that... But I don't think it's going to take away the fatigue...”

“I would be very happy if I could take a bath while being squeezed by Yuya-kun. I want to be hugged.”

Kaede, while saying this, rubbed her cheek against my collarbone as if she were a cat being spoiled by me. Her eyes were moist with anticipation and pleading. If she looks at me like this, I want to hug you, you know?

“Fufu. I'm glad. Thank you, Yuya-kun.”

Kaede relaxed and surrendered her body to me. I was so happy to feel her

trust in me. I put all my strength into the arm around her waist and hugged her tightly as the blissful time passed quietly.

My reasoning was driven to the brink of extinction, but sometimes these things were not so bad.

## Chapter 62 I dont wear it when going to bed at night

By the time I got out of the bath after taking a mixed bath with Kaede, the date had already changed. I got into my futon with a burning body and opened my English vocabulary book to recite. It was best to memorize things before going to bed, because that was when the memory mechanism worked best.

“Fufu. You’re doing great, Yuya-kun. I’m sure you’ve studied a lot today, but you’re still doing it before going to bed. It’s not good to be overly persistent, you know?”

Kaede came over as I combed my hair. The white porcelain skin peeking out from her fuzzy pajamas still seemed to be hot. Her cheeks were steamy, and she looked sexier than she usually did after a bath. It was not just that. The most important reason for this was that I couldn’t get Kaede’s school swimsuit out of my head.

“Fufu. Yuya-kun, your face is red, isn’t it? Is it possible that you are remembering... my swimsuit? As I grew in many ways, my appearance of my swimsuit became even more tighter.”

Kaede crawled up next to me on all fours and approached me rapidly. Her tongue licking was strangely lustrous, and her whispering in my ear was debaucherously sweet.

And that was not all. If you looked down a little, you could see her cleavage through her pajamas. And hers was a big one. I know it was hot after a bath,

but I think you should close the front properly. I mean, wait. I can see the skin color of the skin, and that means...

“Did you notice that? Yes, you did. As you can imagine, Yuya-kun, I’m now... bra-less!”

Aaaaaahhhhhh!? So it was what I thought!? Why!? Don’t you usually act differently!? Normally, when I sleep with Kaede, you wear your underwear properly, right!? So why!?

“Because I spent so much time in the bath, I felt like it would get steamy if I wore it.... And I’m not really one to wear underwear when going to bed.”

“I wish you would have said that earlier or not at all if possible! Why today of all days!?”

It was a shocking truth. I didn’t know that Kaede didn’t wear a bra at bedtime. No, that in itself was fine (no, not fine), but the problem was the timing. Even though we were both wearing swimsuits, if she revealed this to me on the same day that we had washed each other’s bodies, bathed together, and hugged in the bathtub, it would only push me over the edge when I was already nervous about remembering.

“I thought Yuya-kun would be surprised if I told him that I don’t wear underwear to bed at night when we first started living together...”

No, no, no! On our first night of living together, you tried to come in when I wanted to take a normal bath!? The next morning, you actually came crashing in on me!? Don’t tell me you forgot!?

“... That’s enough of the old days, you know. What’s more important is now. Since Yuya and I took a bath together and washed each other’s bodies, I thought it was time for me to lift the ban on no bra at bedtime.”

Kaede, for some reason, put on a proud face and said, ‘Ahem’. I’m glad it was winter since she was wearing thick pajamas. If it had been summer and she had been wearing a t-shirt or something, I would have been in big trouble. The murder weapon was not only the bountiful fruit itself.

“Fufu. You really are a cute chicken, Yuya-kun. I can easily see the excitement in your eyes. Seeing Yuya-kun like that makes me want to... torment him.”

“T-torment? What are you talking about, Kaede—?”

“Thanks for the me~al. Ha~am.”

Faster than I could react, Kaede closed the distance further and licked my earlobe. And her advance didn't end there. She licked the entire ear with her wet tongue, and then finished it off with a sweet bite. It lasted only about five seconds.

Startled, I let out a short scream, jumped up and fell off the bed. It hurt like h\*\*l.

“Yuya-kun!? Are you okay!?”

“Ouch, it's... okay, it's... okay, everything's fine.”

As I sat up and rubbed my back, Kaede patted my chest in relief. I'm sorry to say that you're feeling relieved, but I just want to say something.

“Kaede, let's get this over with, shall we?”

“... Yes. I'm sorry for getting carried away.”

Kaede apologized to me with a sullen look on her face. If she was a puppy, her ears would be drooping, and her tail would be down after being scolded by her owner. I feel sorry for her when I see her like that, so I guess I'm pretty naive too. But I can't help it. I want Kaede to smile.

“Err... you know. It's not that I don't like ear licking or anything. I mean, not every day, but once in a while would be nice, it's not that I don't like ear licking or anything like that. .... Don't be discouraged, Kaede.”

“... Are you angry? Are you angry at me for overdoing it?”

Kaede asked me with a raised eyebrow. What, were you aware that you had

gone too far? I smiled bitterly and gently patted Kaede's head.

“Don't worry, I'm not mad. I was surprised, but it's more like a reward for me. But don't overdo it, okay?”

“Okay. Understood. Even if Yuya-kun's looking cute, I will try to control myself a little. Just a little bit.”

Hey, Kaede. Why did you say it twice? Is it because it's important? Can't you just control yourself a bit? I'm really tired... I'm not going to memorize anything, so I'm going to bed.

“There's still time before the exam, so let's go to bed today. Here, I'll turn off the lights, so please get under the covers.”

I hurriedly got under the covers. Then, of course, Kaede hugged me in her arms, reducing the distance between us to zero. I felt even more softness than usual, and this was even more destructive than I imagined.

“Hey, Yuya-kun. Don't you want to have a good night kiss?”

So this is what it means to be trapped, huh? As I was mumbling stupid thoughts in my head, Kaede asked me pleadingly with her eyes watering. Yeah, it was really cute.

“Good night, Kaede.”

I flipped my body over and covered Kaede. I kissed her gently, as if I was pushing her down on the bed, and then I rolled over and returned to my back position. Kaede was silent, but I could tell she was shivering from her arms. What's wrong?

“Yuya-kun is a striker after all. He turned the game upside down with one shot...”

Even in the dark with the lights off, I could see Kaede's face turning bright red. If you get hit, you have to hit back, right?

Thus, the long day that started with the study session was finally over.

## Chapter 63 They shouldn't be in the same class

We only had that study session at our house during that weekend before the exam period. After this, the four of us stayed after school to study in the classroom and library, but I didn't like the way Shinji and Otsuki-san always looked at us when we were leaving.

"Yuya-kun, how did your test go? Do you think you can reach your goal?"

"I'm not sure. Thanks to Kaede's teaching, I've performed the best on this test I've ever done, but I won't know until the results arrive."

Today was March the 13th, the last day of the tests. School was already over in the morning, so the students were talking about going out for fun, karaoke, bowling, etc. to release the stress they had accumulated during this period.

Kaede and Otsuki-san came to the classroom as soon as HR was over. They had received an invitation from one of the girls in their class to go out with them, and they asked Shinji and me if we wanted to join them. Shinji, of course, immediately said he'd go, but...

"Sorry, Kaede. I can't come, I've got stuff to do."

Unfortunately, I declined the offer. And they couldn't believe my answer! The three of them made expressions of disbelief. Kaede's face looked like the Munch's portrait 'the scream'. [TN: View The Scream, 1893 by Edvard Munch for more info.]

"Yu-Yuya-kun... are you going somewhere? Then, I'll go with you—"

“No, this is more of a personal errand, and Kaede can’t come with me, nor Shinji and Otsuki of course. That guy probably has a hard time with Kaede, so...”

“That guy? Who is that person!? Is it someone I know!? Maybe, Yuya-ku—”

“No! That’s definitely not it! Kaede, it’s Taka-san I’m going to see. You’ve met him once, right?”

It was last night when Kaede was taking a bath. Takashi Omichi, or Taka-san, called me after a long time. [TN: Remember chapter 1 – 4? Yeah, I also somewhat forgot.]

“Hello, Yuya? It’s been a while. How are you doing?”

“It’s been a while, Taka-san. I’m doing well, thanks to you. How are you, Taka-san?”

“It’s not so bad either. More importantly, I’m sorry for calling you out of the blue. Actually, my daughter, Rika, wants to see Yuya again. Isn’t it about time you came?”

Rika-chan, Taka-san’s first-grade daughter, whom he loved dearly, was like a younger sister to me, having played with her many times since she was a child.

Whenever my parents were away from home, I often had dinner at Taka-san’s house, and he was quite fond of me. By the way, Taka-san’s wife was Harumi-san, and she had a cute little animal-like smile on her face. However, when she got angry, she seemed to be as scary as a demon (according to Taka-san).

“That’s why, why don’t you come visit me at home soon? Harumi is also worried about you, so it’s okay if you just show up once. I’m counting on you, Yuya.”

“Sure, Taka-san. I had something I wanted to discuss with Taka-san too, so this is just the right time. Tomorrow is the last day of my final exams and I’ll



be done with school in the morning, so can I come over afterwards?”

“Of course! If that’s the case, I’ll also try to be at home, too. See you tomorrow!”

We had that exchange last night. I should have told Kaede at that time, but I couldn’t talk about it because after this phone call, I took a bath with Kaede and went to bed right away.

“I see that’s what you meant. If you’re going to Omichi-san’s house, I certainly can’t interfere.”

“I’m really sorry, Kaede. I’ll try to be home before supper, okay?”

“It’s okay that you talked to him properly. That’s what the relationship between Omichi-san and Yuya-kun is, you’re like brothers separated by years. So, I can’t intervene. I hope you have a great time.”

Kaede smiled at me, but I could see a hint of loneliness in her eyes. I apologized in my heart once again and grabbed her hand to tell her how I felt as best I could.

“The only one I like is Kaede, and you’re the only one in my eyes.”

“Y-Yuya-kun! What are you saying out of the blue!? Please say such things at home or at least in a place where no one is around!”

Kaede’s face turned so red that it looked like it was going to burst into flames, and the rest of the classmates in the classroom, including Shinji and Otsuki-san, let out a huge sigh.

“Don’t you dare confess your love to me out of the blue, you b\*\*\*\*\*d!”

“I don’t think I’d like it if someone told me straight out like that.”

“Boys think it’s cool not to say they like you. I wish I could be told like that.”

“But only if you’re good-looking. That’s what I think... so, really, go explode, you meotoppuru.”

I tried my best to tune out the sorrowful voices of men and women. Kaede looked down and glanced up at me. What's wrong? I asked her with my eyes, and she beckoned me to come closer to her face.

"I-I... I love you too, Yuya-kun. So, I mean... please come back soon, okay?"

Kaede whispered softly in my ear so that no one else would hear. The sound of her voice was mixed with a hint of hot breath, which sent a shockwave down my spine. This is exactly what you shouldn't do in public!

"They easily create this strawberry space everywhere... this is why this meotoppuru..."

"I'm kind of worried that Yoshi's naturalness has been transferring to Kaede-chan lately. I have to pray that these two don't end up in the same class."

What a horrible thing to say, Otsuki-san! That was where you should be praying for the four of us to be in a class together!

"You'll have to pray about that a lot with your hand on your own chest, Yoshi."

Smiling grimly, Otsuki-san took Shinji's hand and walked out of the classroom. The rest of the students started to move in response.

"So, Yuya-kun then. I'm going to go play with Akiho-chan and the others for a bit, too. Please call me when you get back."

"Uh-huh. All right. Then we'll go back to the halfway point together."

We held hands again as we left the classroom.

# Chapter 64 Taka-san is a foolish Parent

I parted ways with Kaede at the station, holding back my regret for leaving her. I heard that she was going to karaoke with Shinji, Otsuki-san and some of Kaede's classmates. As much as I wanted to listen to her singing voice, my first priority was to talk to Taka.

"Don't worry, Yuya. I'll take a video of Hitotsuba-san singing and send it to you later."

"I'm counting on you, Shinji."

What I needed was a good friend who understood me. As we parted, Shinji gave me a thumbs up. Now I can enjoy Kaede's passionate singing later.

"Well then, Yuya-kun. I'm off."

"Yeah, go ahead. Have a good time."

After watching Kaede get on the train in the opposite direction from home, I sent a message to Taka-san that I was on my way. What I want, even at the expense of today's fun, was advice from experience. And the opinion of Harumi-san, an adult woman.

The reason why I'm going to Taka-san's house was: It was to discuss the return gift for White Day, which was coming up the next day. It was all for the sake of making Kaede happy. The only time I am able to go shopping would be today, so it was a great opportunity that I could consult with him before that!

“Yuya-onii-chan!”

I arrived in front of the house, rang the doorbell, and as soon as the door opened, a little girl rushed, hugging me vigorously at my feet. This cute little girl with pigtails was Rika-chan, Taka’s only daughter, whom he loved very much. I can’t tell you how much he loved her, but it was enough to make him grit his teeth when he saw her holding hands with me.

“Yuya! I’m not giving you my Rika! If you really want her as your wife, you’ll have to beat me!”

“No, Taka-san, what are you talking about? How much of an age difference do you think there is between Rika-chan and me? That’s indeed not good.”

And I’m all about Kaede. Well, I’m sure that when Rika-chan grows up, she’ll be beautiful just like her mother, Harumi-san.

“What!? Are you saying that my Rika isn’t pretty!? Ah!! I’ll never forgive you for that!”

What a pain in the a\*s this guy is. It’s so shameful to start stomping on the ground and screaming, Taka-san. Why is it that when he’s at work, he’s so dignified in his suit, but at home, he’s such a failure?

“When you have a child, you’ll understand how I feel now! And in your case, that Hitotsuba Kaede will be your wife. Your child is definitely going to be so cute!”

Kaede’s and my child. If my child looked like Kaede, I’m sure she would be a beautiful girl, and if he was a boy, I’m sure he would be a handsome boy.

“Yuya-onii-chan... are you getting married?”

Rika-chan, who had been listening to the comical exchange between Taka-san and me, squeezed our joined hands and asked me with her dull eyes slightly moistened.

“I’m not getting married yet, okay? And even if I wanted to, I can’t do it yet.”

“Good! I, Rika, want to be Yuya-onii-chan’s wife!”

Hey, Taka-san. Don’t point those murderous eyes at a healthy high school student. If Rika-chan, who was cackling happily, were to see Taka-san’s demonic face right now, she would start crying in an instant. If she does, Harumi-san will get mad at you!

“Welcome, Yuya-kun. Long time no see! How have you been?”

As the three of us were making noise at the door, Harumi-san, a pretty, young wife whose beauty was disproportionate to Taka’s, came in.

“Takashi. Hurry up and show Yuya-kun to the living room! Rika, are you happy to see Yuya-kun?” Harumi-san said, puffing her cheeks.

“Yes! I’m so happy!”

Rika clung to my arm with a smile and giggled, ‘Ehehe’. She’s so cute, she’s like a little sister to me, and I couldn’t help but pat her gently on the head like I do with Kaede. Taka-san turned into a demon, and Harumi-san laughed, holding her mouth.

“Ara ara. Good for you, Rika. Yuya-kun, I know you’re tired after exams, but can you play with Rika for me?”

“Yeah, that’s fine. I have something to discuss with Harumi-san too, so can we talk later?”

“Anything I can answer, I will. But first, let’s have lunch. Come on, you can help me with the preparation, don’t keep sulking!”

‘Yes, of course!’ The back of Taka-san’s head had no dignity at all as he straightened his spine and headed for the kitchen. I wonder what will happen to me if I marry Kaede and have a relationship like this. I feel like I’ll be dragged along with her desires, or rather, I’ll be dancing around on the palm of her hand in a good way. This wouldn’t be bad, though.

“Mou... Yuya-onii-chan, you’re thinking about other girls right now, even though you have me in front of you, right? I don’t think that’s a good idea!”

Rika puffed out her cheeks in a cute way. I would have to ask Taka-san what kind of parental policy he was following at a later time.

## Chapter 65 Its Best to Ask Someone with Experience

“So, Yuya-kun, what is it that you want to discuss?”

With a cup of coffee after dinner, we were finally able to get down to the business of the day. It had been a long time since Harumi-san had cooked for me, but it had gotten better. That said, Harumi-san was still very bad at cooking. Of course, Harumi-san was trying her best, but she had no sense of taste and had destroyed Taka’s tongue more times than he could count.

The answer was simple: Harumi-san doesn’t taste. Since she also doesn’t use the right amount of seasoning, her food isn’t done in the right way. So, I taught her to measure properly and to taste at the end. This was the only thing that somewhat improved the situation, but enough for Taka-san to be delighted in tears.

Well, that was not the point of this quiet conversation.

“I wanted to ask Harumi-san for advice... well, I wanted to ask what you would be happy to receive as a gift for White Day.”

“For White Day? If that’s what you mean, have you ever done that before? Why are you asking this now... I get it! It’s a present for that cute high school girl you live with, the cutest girl in Japan! Isn’t that right!?”

Hey Taka-san! Did you tell Harumi-san everything by any chance!? Turning away and whistling means you did it! You talk too much, don’t you!?

“Hey, hey, Yuya-kun! How far did you come with that girl? Did you kiss

her? Did you do the grown-up stuff? Or maybe it's even s— ”

“I won't let you say it, Harumi-san! I mean, what are you trying to say when Rika-chan is here!?”

Oh no, I forgot. They were a couple of idiots who didn't mind kissing adult-like in front of their first-grade daughter — something I've never done before. [TN: Yuya refers to French-kissing.] Fortunately for us, Rika was engrossed in her video game, and she was playing a beat-them-up game against Taka-san. Is it my imagination, or does Taka-san look like he's in tears by being beaten helplessly?

“Back to the serious stuff, a nice present to receive... oh, yes. As with any birthday gift, I'm happy with something that can be worn. Or maybe a lipstick? I think it would kind of make her smile thinking that you thought so hard about what would look good on her.”

I see. Something that can be worn. A necklace would be a safe bet. No, I'll save that until her birthday. Lip balm, or lipstick. Kaede's lips are a beautiful cherry color, so what kind of color would suit her?

“Also, I think bangles would be good. [TN: A bracelet-like accessory.] Not many people wear them anymore, but I think they're good for watches and such. It would make her feel like she's always with you, doesn't it?”

That was true. If it was a bracelet, you could wear it to school, and no one would say anything. Or if Kaede gave me a watch as a gift, I would look at it and touch it for no reason. So, that was a good idea.

“I think it would be a good idea to match the color of that watch with your birthday present. That's about all the advice I can give you, but I hope it was helpful.”

“Yes! That was very helpful. I'm so glad I talked to Harumi-san! I'm going to go buy it today right away!”

I thanked Harumi-san, then picked up my bag and stood up. Rika, who had been mercilessly blowing up Taka-san's character with her combos, seemed



to notice this and hurriedly grabbed my legs.

“Yuya-onii-chan, you’re leaving already!? You’ve only just arrived! Dad is no match for me, so let’s play a game! Isn’t that right?”

“That’s right, Yuya! You come over here too! Me and Rika will beat you to a pulp!”

“No, it’s not! Rika and Yuya-onii-chan are going to beat up Dad! Please, big brother Yuya-onii-chan! Just one hour! Can you play a game with Rika for one hour?”

I don’t think it’s okay for a first grader to have eyes that can moisten and appeal to me. A large number of men will easily be defeated by these eyes. She’s truly a scary girl. And me? Of course I’ll also get defeated by them.

“All right. I promised to play with you again. Then let’s beat up your dad together!”

“Yay! I love you, Yuya-onii-chan!”

We ended up spending an hour after this. I destroyed Taka-san with Rika chan. ‘Just stop ittt!’ I felt a little sorry for Taka-san as he cried out, but it was a helpless appeal in front of Rika-chan’s happy smile.

Halfway through snack time, I decided to leave to go buy a present.

“Thank you for asking for my advice, Harumi-san. Rika-chan, let’s play again, okay?”

“Ugh... Yuya-onii-chan. You’ll come back, won’t you? Will you?”

“Yeah. I’ll be back, so don’t cry. I’ll see you then, Taka-san.”

“Grrr! Next time you come over, I’ll have trained myself to beat you to a pulp! You better be ready for that!”

“You’re not so mature anymore, Taka-san.”

I thanked everyone in the Omichi family one last time and left the house. As I left, Harumi-san smiled and said that her girlfriend should be with us, but I don't think that was possible.

Because Kaede and Rika-chan would surely fight then.

# Chapter 66 Choose Your Gifts Carefully

After leaving Taka's house, I took the train to a large shopping mall in the city center. The time was now past 4:30 pm. I told Kaede that I would be back by 7:00 pm, so I still had plenty of time to spare.

Based on Harumi-san's advice, I came up with a gift for White Day: a watch. I had never seen Kaede wear a watch, but that was why I wanted to give her one.

I thought about necklaces and chokers, but if it was something she could wear every day, whether it was at school or on her days off, a watch would be a good choice. With this conclusion, I looked at the showcases, but there were so many that I couldn't choose which one would suit Kaede.

"Welcome. What kind of watch are you looking for?"

As I groaned, a clerk approached me. Thankfully, it was a female clerk. I was a little embarrassed, but she was the perfect person to talk to.

"I'm looking for a White Day gift for her. I'm not so sure, I think it should be cute... but it's hard to choose when there are so many to choose from."

"So you are looking for a cute watch as a gift for your girlfriend. Most of such customers choose by color or design."

According to the sales clerk: For women with thin arms, it was safer to choose a ladies' design with a small dial. However, there were some people who would prefer rugged designs like those worn by men, so it was hard to

say for sure. Leather bands gave a mature impression, but they also get stuffy and dirty in the summer, and can even tear. Yeah, I don't get any wiser with this.

“By the way, what is this girlfriend of yours like?”

“Kaede? Well... she's a pampered girl, she has a cute smile on her face, she's very aggressive but not good at fighting back, and she's a pampered girl who falls asleep in your arms when you notice her... Oh, was that the second time I said she's a pampered girl?”

“... I understand. I get it. Really, it's enough.”

As for me, I wasn't even close to finishing. The one person who cared about me more than anyone else, the one person I truly wanted to take care of more than anyone else. That's Kaede.

“How should I put it, she's like a cat, isn't she? A cat is a cat, but I get the impression that she's a cat who's madly in love with her owner.”

Oh. That's the shopkeeper! He expressed Kaede in a clear analogy while his face somewhat slackened. I couldn't help but clap my hands. I don't know how he was able to come up with such a precise answer with such fragmentary information.

“Ahahahaha... thank you. There are some brands that are recommended for her. This way.”

The clerk led me to a glass case with an amiable smile on her face, where I found a watch of an unfamiliar brand. But the design was very cute, and I knew it would suit Kaede.

“The most unique feature of this brand is the cat's face motif. It's pink gold, which is popular among women, so it gives off a lovely and pretty impression.”

And that was not all. The dial and cat's ears were adorned with an abundance of bright red light stones. In addition, there was a playful touch; in that a cat

was secretly lurking among the many hearts on the dial.

“Oh. Looks like you like it, don’t you?”

“...Yes. I’ll take that. Can you wrap it up for me?”

‘Yes, of course,’ the clerk said with a smile, put on her gloves and took the watch out of the glass case. She made sure there were no scratches and had it wrapped for a gift. She also declared that if Kaede tried it on and it didn’t fit, she would be available to freely fix it for her. Thank goodness.

“Thank you for your purchase.”

“Thank you very much too. Thanks to you, I was able to make a good purchase.”

“I look forward to seeing you again. And when you do, please bring your proud girlfriend with you. We’ll be waiting for you.”

“Yes, I’ll be sure to come back if I ever need to buy a watch!”

I thanked her again and left the store. The time was still before 6pm. It looks like I would be able to get home in plenty of time. I guess I’ll leave a message for Kaede before I return.

As soon as I sent a message that I was going home, I got a read and a reply. It seemed that Kaede and her friends hadn’t broken up yet, but they were leaving early. As I was reading, I received a phone call. It was Kaede, of course.

“Hello, Kaede? How are you?”

“Yuya-kun! Help me, please! Akiho-chan is teasing me!”

“Otsuki-san? What do you mean by this?”

“When I insisted I’ll be going home first, she claimed that I just want to see ‘my darling, darling’ as soon as possible! And that I would ask ‘my darling, darling’ to nudge my head as a reward for studying hard for the exam! And

these other terrible suggestions... please help!”

“... Can you put Otsuki-san on for me?”

I won't tolerate anyone who says anything to annoy Kaede, even if it was my girlfriend's best friend! I also want to see Kaede as soon as possible. So I'm going to ask her to let Kaede go!

“Hello hello, this is Otsuki calling for you~. What is it, Yoshi?”

“Oh...Otsuki-san. Can you please stop picking on Kaede?”

“Shut up! Kaede-chan is everyone's Kaede-chan, not just Yoshi's! You're breaking anti-monopoly laws!”

‘That's right, that's right!’, came the voice of Shinji and the girls who seemed to be playing with him from the phone. I can understand why you want to keep playing with Kaede. But...

“I'm sorry, Otsuki-san. Kaede is a very, very important person for me. And I seem to be surprisingly possessive. I can't wait to meet her. So I'm sorry, but can you please let Kaede go?”

“...I, I understand... I'll release Kaede-chan right now. I hope you'll be happy... take care of Kaede-chan.”

“Yuya-kun... well, I'm going home now.”

“Yeah, be careful on your way.”

“Y-yes. I... also love you, Yuya-kun.”

In a hazy voice, Kaede said, and then the call ended. What was this phone call about? Could it be that Kaede was made to call me? No, I'm thinking too much.

I put the watch in my bag and headed home. The time to give it to her would be before she went to bed. Right now, the sun has gone down.

Kaede, I hope you'll be pleased.

# Chapter 67 Welcome Home Wheres the Kiss

Relaxing in the living room, I waited for Kaede to come home. I had arrived after shopping for dinner, but I was still surprised that I arrived home earlier than her. Even after that phone call, Kaede couldn't leave right away?

“... I'm back, Yuya-kun.”

I heard the door open with a bang, so I picked myself up from the sofa and hurried to the door. Kaede was there with a tired look on her face to see.

“Welcome back, Kaede. Did you have fun at karaoke?”

She took off her shoes and walked up to me like a chick (TL: Chicken child) and hugged me. I was surprised, but I held her tightly and nudged her head.

“What's wrong, Kaede? Did they say a lot of things to you after that phone call, by any chance?”

“Yes...everyone bullied me so much. I was told a lot of things, like that I was this meotoppuru, or a sugarppuru [TN: Sugar + couple]. And it's all because of Yuya-kun.”

How can it be my fault? I'm sure I didn't say anything strange. I've been trying to think back on what I said while nudging Kaede, but I still couldn't think of any reasons.

“Uuu... Yuya-kun is a natural after all. It's a foul thing to make me nervous and happy like it's nothing. I want to make Yuya-kun nervous too...”



No, Kaede. Just the fact that I'm hugging you like this is enough to make me nervous, though. Besides, your happy smile is so cute that even just seeing it makes me flustered. There is no moment when I don't get nervous living with Kaede.

"...Hey, Yuya-kun. Aren't you going to give me a welcome home kiss?"

"Well, that's abrupt again, Kaede."

"Hey, where's the kiss? The kiss? Yuya-kun, how about a kiss? I want to kiss you, Yuya-kun!"

Kaede began to rock her body back and forth in my arms like a spoiled child. Or rather, her words and actions have suddenly become those of a severely spoiled child. But that's what makes her cute.

"Alright, don't get out of control, Kaede. Welcome back. I've been waiting for you."

I put all my strength into my arms around her waist to stop her from moving, and then I lifted her chin and kissed her. Our lips lingered on each other a little longer than usual, as if we were savoring each other.

"Hauu... Yuya-kun... I love you."

"I, I love you too, Kaede..."

We lost track of time for a while. Kaede and I repeatedly kissed like birds pecking at each other and surrendered to happiness.

\* \* \* \* \*

Today's dinner was a quick and easy oyakodon (rice, topped with chicken and eggs) [TL: Damn, the raw already made the side notes for me!] since I didn't have much time to prepare. Chicken was cheap and it was easy to make as long as you had onions and eggs. I was already done with the prep work before Kaede came home, so all I had to do was cook.

"Yes! As always, Yuya-kun, you season the food so well! Not too spicy, not

too sweet, just the right balance! What can I say, these fluffy, melty eggs are the best! It makes me want to eat more rice!”

“Hahaha. I’m glad you’re happy, Kaede. But be careful not to eat too much, okay?”

“Yes! I’ll be careful!”

As she said this, Kaede showed off her eating skills, making me feel good as I watched her munching the food away. It made me want to make this dish again and see that big smile on her face again and again.

“I feel like I’ve only been having dinner made by Yuya-kun lately. I’ll make it too; so if there’s anything you want to eat, just let me know, okay?”

“I can’t help but want to make it because I can see Kaede’s happy face. But I also want to eat Kaede’s homemade food... that’s right! Do you want to make dumplings with me sometime? I think it’s good to have something to work with. How about it?”

I had always wanted to try making gyoza, but never been able to do it. She didn’t want to make them alone, but rather to make them together with someone and make a lot of noise. It wouldn’t be a bad idea to invite Shinji and Otsuki-san and have a gyoza party with the four of us, but I would like to work with only Kaede first.

“That’s a great idea! This is our first joint project together! Let’s make it together! I’ll wrap it up nicer than you!”

“I’m not going to lose either, okay? Let’s see who can make it more beautiful!”

So it was decided to hold a championship to see who could make the most beautiful gyoza. The judges would be Shinji and Otsuki-san. On the day of the championship, I planned to send them a photo as a surprise and ask them to judge. I’m sure they would say something about meotoppuru, but I don’t care.

“Haaa... I’m so full and happy. Can I just fall asleep in my bed? Isn’t that a great idea?”

“I think you’ll sleep better if you soak in a bath to warm yourself up before you go to bed, don’t you?”

“Ahhh... Yuya-kun is a Spartan. I get it. Well then, Yuya-kun, after you. Because I don’t think I will be able to move for a while yet.”

She was probably exhausted from the double combo of studying for the exam and the mental fatigue from the karaoke. Kaede moved to the sofa and slumped down. I was somewhat worried, but she waved her hand and said she was fine, so I believed her and headed for the bathroom.

# Chapter 68 Bathroom Suite Kiss

The swimsuit that Ms. Miyamoto had prepared for me in the changing room caught my eye and I couldn't help but pick it up. My head was swallowed up in a whirlpool of worry as I remembered wearing them and taking a mixed bath with Kaede back then.

“No! You can't expect the same thing to happen like that day again!”

I shook my head and was about to put the swimsuit back on the shelf, but then I thought better of it. Kaede was down, so I don't think she'll be coming in. But what if Kaede makes a surprise attack? When I first started living here, I used to lock the bathroom door, but now I let it go because I trusted that she wouldn't break in, and it wasn't safe to keep it locked in case something happened in the bathroom.

“Always assume the worst and act accordingly. Then I guess I should wear a bathing suit...”

Convincing myself of this, I decided to put on my bathing suit and take a bath. Besides, I need to unify my mind before the big White Day gift-giving mission that was coming up before going to bed. I won't be able to think straight if I continue to worry.

I took a quick shower, rinsed off my body, washed my hair, and took a bath. Covering the face with a towel dipped in hot water and relaxing. Ahh. I felt soothed.

Gatcha.

I wondered how long it had been. I was so comfortable that my

consciousness had traveled into a dream. What I heard in my dreamy slumber was the real sound of someone coming into the bathroom.

“Listen to me, Yuya-kun. Akiho-chan has been really persistent with me? When did you fall in love with Yuya-kun, and what did he confess to you, and what did your first kiss taste like, and... don't you think it's terrible?”

“That's terrible. I would have kept my confession to myself. I'd hate it too if Shinji asked me how I confessed.”

Kaede continued her story in a voice that was as loud as the sound of her showering body.

“That's right! ‘Then what about you, Akiho-chan!’ I asked back. And you know what she said? She turned red and said, ‘That's a secret.’ She didn't tell me, but she tried to make me tell her!”

“That's a terrible thing to say, isn't it? I'm going to ask people, so it wouldn't be fair if I didn't answer properly too.”

The sound of the shower stopped. A visitor entered into the bathtub with a posh smile. The visitor hugged me tightly. Eh, what is going on!? When I peeled off the towel that was covering my head, what I saw was, as expected, Kaede (with a school swimsuit).

“Ka-ka-ka, Kaede!? Why are you coming in the bath!?”

“I was worried about Yuya-kun because he didn't come out of the bath for a long time... and you seemed so relaxed, so I thought I'd join you. Is it bad?”

Well, it's not bad. And you're wearing a bathing suit. But Kaede. Can you please stop hugging me so tightly like a koala? You see, I'm hit in various ways and it's not good. To be more specific, your twin mounds are squeezing too tightly. And it feels really, really good.

“That's great. I want to squeeze Yuya-kun even more. And... and I'd like to... kiss you.”

Kaede put her lips on mine with a hot exhale. Bird kisses that I never would

get tired of, even though we had done it many times at the entrance. Light and shallow, a rain of kisses that conveyed our feelings for each other. But the heat of the bathroom and the fact that we were both so close to our pristine forms made us even more excited than usual. In fact, Kaede was completely out of control.

“Yuya-kun... Yuya-kun...”

Breathing hard, Kaede whispered my name in a sweet, lustrous voice and flicked her tongue like a puppy. I wrapped my mouth around the soft, cherry-red tongue and gently intertwined my tongue with it. As I thought, Kaede’s tongue was as soft as a rice cake, and incredibly sweet and delicious.

“Haah... Yuya-kun... I love you. I love you...”

“I love you too, Kaede.”

The sound of wet, tangled saliva. The rough and sweet breathing of Kaede and I reverberated in the silent bathroom, and it melted my brain into sludge again. I was so happy that I couldn’t think about anything else.

How long had we been kissing? I think our tongues would melt into one with each other. Our lips were deeply pressed together for a long time, so long that it seemed like that. But as expected, I couldn’t hold my breath anymore and pulled away. However, at that moment, a sparkling transparent thread dripped from our lips, symbolizing the sweetness of the act.

“Haa... Haa... fuu... how was it? It felt really, really good.”

“...Me too. It felt so good. But, this is no good...”

Whether it was a bird-like kiss or this deep-sea kiss, once you tasted it, it would become a forbidden fruit you would never forget. I want to do it again. I want to taste Kaede’s tongue and saliva again to my heart’s content.

That was what my brain was telling me.

“Why not? Oh, you’re right, it’s not supposed to be done in this position in the bath. Because Yuya-kun’s... you know... p—”

“AHHHH!!!? Don’t you dare say it! I mean, I’m sorry!”

I stopped Kaede’s shy whispering in my ear by screaming. I then peeled off Kaede, who was stuck in a koala hug with me, and spun her around to face me, and I quickly stumbled out of the bathroom.

I mean, it was crazy not to get excited about this stuff! If I’d just hugged her normally, it wouldn’t have gone this far! In fact, the last time I did it, it was totally fine! If only I’d worn a bathing suit!

No, I guess it was impossible to hide it even if I’m wearing one.

I wanted to give her a White Day gift, but now, I was too embarrassed and anxious to even see Kaede’s face.

# Chapter 69 Outpost Massage

“Yuya-kun, please don’t be so depressed.”

Kaede hugged me from behind as if to comfort me while I was sitting on the edge of the bed, sobbing in my heart.

“I can’t... With this shame, I can’t get married anymore...”

I was fine up to the point where I took a bath with Kaede, held Koala in my arms, and kissed her so intimately that my whole body became one with her debauchery, but I made a huge mistake that caused my junior to arise. I wanted to end myself.

“You’re a boy, it’s normal. I’m rather relieved. It would be more of a problem for me if you didn’t react.”

I’d love to meet a man who didn’t react to an immoral kiss where he felt united with the person he loved.

“Besides, Yuya-kun has already been chosen as my husband, so please don’t worry. Yuya-kun’s debauched face when we were kissing... it was so cute.”

Kaede’s voice was so mature and lustrous that I couldn’t believe she was a classmate. This made me so nervous that my body shook.

“Kaede... you’re giving me chills... stop...”

“Fufu. Yuya-kun has weak ears, doesn’t he? It’s so cute. It makes me want to tease you more.”



I couldn't stop myself from shaking as a gentle breath poured into my ear. Kaede's lips were soft and her teeth were touching my earlobe. The softness of her lips and the slight touch of her teeth gave me an indescribable feeling of comfort.

"What happened, Kaede...? What you're doing, is just... weird, you know?"

"It's Yuya-kun's fault, okay? Haaah... because of your sweet voice with your cute prodigal face... the wolf inside me has been awakened."

Despite what she said, Kaede gently moved away from me. When I turned around fearfully, I saw that her face had turned fiery red. If you were embarrassed, you didn't have to force yourself.

"It's fine. There are times when I want to tease Yuya-kun too! Yuya-kun always makes me nervous all the time, so this is my way of getting back at him!"

Kaede insisted, puffing out her cheeks. No, that was a false accusation. Kaede's surprises, like the last time and today's mixed bathing, almost made my heart stop. That was why I couldn't help but fear that she was trying to finish me off with her gentle biting.

"I've become a wolf, and Yuya-kun is just a bite away! You can look forward to the time that will surely arrive."

What was the meaning of that fearless smile? And what was the time when it would arrive? Yeah, let's try not to think about it.

"That's beside the point. Yuya-kun, I'd like to ask you to give me that back massage you were talking about before, can you do that for me?"

"Oh, we talked about that, didn't we? Yeah, okay. You're probably tired from the exam, so I'll give you a rub. Can you lie down on your stomach?"

'Yay!' Kaede shouted in joy, and laid down on the bed with a plop. I tried to give her the pillow that Kaede always used because I knew that would be hard on her neck.

“I want Yuya-kun’s pillow! I want Yuya’s pillow!”

Kaede was moving her arms and legs flapping around. Today she was busy being a spoiled brat, a bewitching beauty, and then back to being a spoiled child. But all of it was so cute and endearing that I thought I might be addicted to Kaede.

“Yes, then put your head on my pillow. Relax your body and take it easy.”

“Hah... Yuya-kun’s smell... it’s so soothing.”

Kaede, I don’t mind if you bury your face in the pillow, but I’d rather you not sniff. I have to use that pillow when I sleep tonight.

Chuckling in my mind, I sat down around the base of Kaede’s legs and rubbed her gently with my palms, drawing slow circles along her spine. Once that was done, I rubbed the muscles around the shoulder blades.

“Ahh, there... there, that feels so good. More... give me more, please.”

I massaged Kaede, occasionally checking to see if she was in pain. But Kaede’s muscles weren’t as tense as I rubbed them. That was a big difference from the failure of my dad and Taka-san. Their backs were so tight that no matter how hard I rubbed, I couldn’t get them to relax.

“Yuya-kun. I’ve heard a soccer commentator say in a commercial that you should rub your butt to prevent a stiff back, is that true?”

“Oh, it’s true. I’ve also heard that when the piriformis muscle in your buttocks gets tight, the muscles in your lower back that are linked to that muscle also get tight.” [TN: Yes, it’s piriformis.]

Well, I don’t know if it was scientifically proven, because it was just a story that my s\*\*\*\*y dad heard in his foggy head when he went to a physical therapy clinic.

“Ah...I see. Oh. You’re good, Yuya-kun. It feels so good. Then... can you rub that pisiform muscle thingy too?”

“Kaede’s body isn’t really stiff at all, but... sure. I’ll rub you there, too.”

“Right, do that and — wait? You’re going to rub me there!?”

What were you surprised about, Kaede? This was a massage, after all. Moreover, unlike when I rubbed your calves and thighs in the bath, you were wearing your pajamas now. I might be excited, but not distraught.

“Look, you’re straining your hips. Can you relax?”

“Ha, hahi...”

“Don’t worry, I’ll be gentle.”

I deliberately leaned over and whispered in Kaede’s ear, then resumed the treatment. Kaede let out an inaudible scream and plopped her face down on the pillow. I could tell that she was embarrassed because her ears were covered in red leaves.

Kaede’s peachy buttocks were just as soft as you’d expect, with no stiffness whatsoever. Even when rubbing and pressing it with your palm, its elasticity returned immediately with a rebound, and yet it was so soft, making it so easy to sink in. The person I was massaging was really elated.

“Nuu... Yuya-kun’s hand is so warm, and it feels so amazing...”

Yeah. This wasn’t safe to do for a long time. It was okay if I just kneaded her butt, but combined with Kaede’s lustful voice, I might lose my reasoning.

“Yes! Massage over! There’s nothing wrong with Kaede’s body!”

I moved to Kaede’s side and patted her on the head. But she seemed somewhat dissatisfied. Did she want me to massage her butt more? No, that was not it. She was unhappy that there was no lower leg massage. I’m sure it is. That must be it.

“...I’m sure I’ve teased you too much today, so I’ll leave you with this.”

Thank God. If she demanded anything more, I had no choice but to get down

on my knees and apologize. Kaede raised her body and stretched, rolling her shoulders and silently checking her condition. That silence was painful, but Kaede released a cheer that broke through it.

“Yu, Yuya-kun! That’s amazing! My body feels so much lighter! My shoulders, which were somehow heavy, are now very comfortable!”

“Nice! Then I’m glad. It was worth the massage.”

She gave me her usual bright smile like a sunflower. Yes, the bewitching Kaede was thrilling and attractive, but I like the innocent Kaede better. It makes me want to spoil her.

“Well, well. Now that Yuya-kun’s massage is over, let’s go to bed. The date has just changed.”

—It’s here. The time has finally come. I took a deep breath and grabbed Kaede by the shoulders, who was humming a tune as she tried to get under the covers.

“Eh? W-what’s the matter, Yuya-kun!?”

“Kaede. I have... a present for you!”

With anticipation and anxiety in my heart, I stood on the battlefield called White Day gifting. [TL: Eh? Are we just going to ignore the fact you casually rubbed her a\*s?][ED: Yes, we are.][TL: Bruh...]

# Chapter 70 A Debauched White Day

While Kaede had been drying her hair and taking care of her skin, I took advantage of the time to hide the gift I had bought her at her bedside.

“What’s going on all of a sudden, Yuya-kun? A present? My birthday is still a long way away, you know? We just talked about not caring about our anniversary, and...”

Kaede was thinking with a puzzled look on her face. I didn’t know how it was that she remembered everything about Valentine’s Day and other occasions when she was the one giving the gift, but when she was the one receiving it, she instantly became stupefied. Well, maybe it was a good thing that it was an unintentional surprise.

“Hey, Kaede. What day of the month is it today?”

“Eh? Today? The date has already changed, so it’s March the 14th... eh!? Could it be...!”

“Yeah, yeah. I guess you finally noticed. Today is White Day. I chose this as a token of my appreciation for Kaede. I hope... you’ll accept it?”

I struggled to keep my voice from trembling and handed the package to Kaede, worried that she could hear the sound of my racing heart.

Kaede received it, but for some reason, she turned her head and didn’t say a word. Silence descended in the already quiet night. I was so nervous that my heart was about to jump out of my mouth. This nervousness was on the same

level as when I confessed my feelings under the stars.

“Yuya-kun... can I open it, please?”

After a while, Kaede asked me by squeezing out her voice, and I nodded my head in silence. The silence, which seemed to last forever, was over, but what came next was the difficult task of watching the package open.

Kaede carefully and slowly unwrapped the package, even though she could have just torn it open. I was thirsty. Even the sound of gulping and swallowing was so loud.

Finally, Kaede finished removing the packaging. She opened the light pink cubic box that appeared from it with trembling hands.

“Is this... a watch...? And the cat... it’s cute.”

“Kaede has a kittenish side, so I thought it would look good on you. Besides, I don’t see you wearing a watch, so I thought it would be just fine.”

I thought it was perfect for her because sometimes she was cute and sweet like a kitten and other times she was bewitching like a panther. The color pink gold was not only cute, but also had a luster which created a mature atmosphere. It would look great on Kaede’s white porcelain skin.

“I’ve thought about other things besides watches, like necklaces and bracelets... but a watch would be something you could wear to school or whatever, right? So, you know... it’s like you’re always with me... I thought it would appeal to you that Kaede is my girlfriend.”

I didn’t know what I was talking about anymore.

I wondered if she would think of me if she wore the watch all the time, or if I would be happy if I could see Kaede wearing the watch I gave her, every day. But Kaede didn’t answer anything, instead, she gently took the watch out of the box and stared at it.

“Ka, Kaede...? H-how is it? Do you like it?”

I feel uneasy when you don't say anything. I still thought it would have been better to go for a safe necklace or bangle. I thought the color would have suited her, but maybe she didn't like pink gold? I couldn't stop thinking about it, and I couldn't stop regretting it. Oh, I'm going to cry.

"Eh? Yuya-kun? Why do you look like you're about to cry?"

"... Because, Kaede didn't say anything about it, so I was afraid that you didn't like it..."

"Why would you think so? I apologize that I didn't say anything, but that was because I was so happy with the gift that was filled with Yuya-kun's thoughts that I couldn't say a word."

I looked up at those words. Kaede's cheeks were flushed, and although her expression was smiling, there was a light in her eyes that looked like it was about to spill out.

"You worked so hard to choose this for me, didn't you? That feeling alone makes me very happy. In addition, as Yuya-kun said, just by wearing this, I will be able to feel Yuya-kun close by. Fufu. I think it's a wonderful idea. Yuya-kun is a bit of a romantic sometimes, isn't he?"

Kaede smiled, adding that my confession was also under the starry sky.

"Hey, Yuya-kun. Will you put the watch on my hand? I want you to put it on me first, not me."

Kaede then handed me the watch and held out her left hand. I felt embarrassed as if I were putting on a ring at a wedding, but I couldn't refuse Kaede's expectant gaze. Okay, I'll just think of it as practice before the show.

I took Kaede's hand and gently slid the watch through and quickly fastened the metal clasp. I was worried about the size, but it fit perfectly.

"Thank you. Fufu. This cat face dial is adorable for sure. The color is cute too, I really like it. Thank you so much, Yuya-kun."

"I'm happy for you too, Kaede, if you're happy with it. I was wondering what

I'd do if you didn't like it."

"Mou! Why would you be afraid that I wouldn't like the gift that Yuya-kun has worked so hard to choose for me!? I'm so happy that I want to jump out in joy, but I'm just trying my best to hold back!"

To jump out. If she was that happy, then it was worth it to go to Taka-san's house to ask for advice and talk to the clerk about Kaede.

"... I'm excited to see that satisfied look on Yuya's face. Hey, can I kiss you? Or rather..."

Kaede's arms went around my neck and she pulled me in for a kiss. Her tongue naturally invaded my mouth and entwined itself with mine. 'Kuchi, kuchi' – As the sounds rang out, I wanted to surrender myself to the deep kiss and stop thinking about anything.

"Haaa... fufu. I love you, Yuya-kun. You, more than anyone else."

"K-Kaede... I love you too."

"Huh. Yuya-kun, you look so debauched. Did it feel that good?"

"...A-ah. It felt so, so good..."

It was natural to feel debauched while simultaneously savoring the feel of Kaede's sweet, honey-like saliva and her soft, mochi-like tongue as they intertwined with mine.

"Me too. I feel like this is going to become a habit. But it's not a good idea to do it before going to bed. I'll get so excited that I won't be able to sleep."

"... I guess so. Let's not do this before bed, shall we?"

I wondered when she would do it then, but I didn't comment on it. If we kissed like this every night before going to bed, we would be in a state of debauchery. Or rather, it would happen even if it weren't before bed.

"But what's more important is the future, isn't it? I have to prepare



something so that Yuya-kun can become a wolf at any time.”

“...Hey, Kaede? What are you talking about? Could that be...?”

“It’s that thing. It’s obvious, isn’t it? A cond—”

“I CAN’T LET YOU DO THIS!!!”

My scream gushed into the bedroom in the middle of the night.

I’m a healthy high school boy. It was not that I didn’t have such desires. I’m not going to say I won’t do it until I’m married or anything saintly like that. But because I love Kaede and care about her, I think I have to settle certain things first.

“Mou. How much do you care about me, Yuya-kun... I’m too happy.”

“This is obvious, isn’t it? Come on, it’s late, I’m going to bed. Get under the futon.”

I led Kaede into the futon and got into my usual position. I fell asleep feeling the warmth of my loved one at my chest.

That certain thing to settle was a rite of passage. It was a rite of passage that every man went through, and that was to greet his father-in-law. Only after overcoming this, I would be able to deepen your relationship with Kaede within the bounds of decency.

I need to work harder for that. I made up my mind and closed my eyelids.

# Chapter 71 Deredere Kaede

A few days have passed since White Day, and the morning arrived when the test results would be returned. I felt confident that I had done well and scored better than usual, but I was also worried that I might be wrong and not be good as I expected.

“There’s no point in worrying about it now. And no matter what the result is, I’ve seen how hard you’ve been working. Even if you don’t make it this time, I’m sure you’ll be successful next time.”

Kaede claimed that just because you didn’t make it once didn’t mean that what you studied was useless. You can think about what went wrong and improvise it next time. The most important step was to find what you wanted to study while building on the basics. That was what truly mattered, Kaede concluded.

“Fufu. Tonight I’ll cook a meal for you, so please cheer up. Do you want me to go all out and make roast beef or something?”

Roast beef? Wasn’t that hard to make? But since it was Kaede, I’m sure she would make it earnestly. It was definitely going to be absolutely delicious. If that was the case, I should help her by making a pot-au-feu with lots of vegetables.

“Then dinner will be a joint effort! I’m looking forward to it!”

“If I think about it like that, I’ll be able to make it through the day. Thank you, Kaede.”

“Yes! Let’s work hard for the day! Well then, let’s get going. But before that

—”

Kaede wrapped her hands around my neck as she whispered my name. If there was an ‘I’m home’ kiss, there naturally had to be a ‘I’m off’ kiss. That was what Kaede was looking for. So I gently kissed her beautiful cherry-colored lips.

“Oh... why are you leaving me so soon... I wanted to kiss you more...”

“Because any more would be bad! And it makes me not want to go to school...”

I averted my gaze from Kaede’s pouting mouth and gently let go of her body, which was getting even closer to me. I’m happy to stay at home and hug and kiss her, but we have to leave soon or we would be late. If we do, Shinji would definitely make fun of us.

“Come on, don’t sulk forever. I’m off, Kaede. I’ll give you a welcome home kiss when I get back, and put you in a better mood.”

“Yes! This would really make me feel better! Let’s go quickly, Yuya-kun! Let’s have lots of kisses on the way home!”

Kaede smiled as if a flower had bloomed and took me by the hand as we left the house. I felt warmth in my heart when I saw the pink gold cat watch shining in her hand.

By the way, it looked too good on Kaede. It was a good decision to choose it because it matched well with the uniform. Thanks a lot, clerk, for helping me choose it!

\* \* \* \* \*

All the final exam results were to be returned in the morning. While the classroom echoed with voices of joy and sorrow, I calmly picked up my answer sheet, while in my heart I made a series of grand gut-punches of joy.

“Looking at your face, it seems like your studies have paid off properly, Yuya.”

“Ah. That’s already the best result I’ve ever gotten. I didn’t expect it to be this good, though. I’m trembling for a totally different reason now.”

My scores were in the high 70’s to low 80’s across the board. I put the most effort into English and received a 95, which was surprisingly high even for me. Still, I regretted that I didn’t get a perfect score. Incidentally, the mistakes I made were in elementary English words. I guess it was because during that topic, Kaede had kissed me so passionately. If it hadn’t been for that, I’m sure I would have gotten a perfect score.

“But it’s really great, Yuya. I’m sure this will put you in the top five, if not, the top ten.”

“I’m not so sure about that. Kaede’s probably got a perfect score on all of them, and to get into the top five, that’s what’s going to be hard, unless your average is in the low 80s. They’re all so good.”

I did a quick calculation and my average score for this test was a little over 80. I think I could be in the top five, but the barrier to the top three was still very high. I might have to carry that challenge over to the second year and beyond.

“I never expected Yuya to study seriously. Is it still Hitotsuba-san’s influence?”

“Of course. I’ll have to work hard as Kaede’s boyfriend, right? It wouldn’t be balanced if Kaede’s boyfriend, the top student in the grade, didn’t have great grades, would it?”

“I don’t think Hitotsuba-san cares about that kind of thing... but you worked hard for it and achieved great results, so her love for you has probably reached its peak.”

Shinji nodded to himself with deep emotion. Well, what he said was generally correct. If it wasn’t for Kaede’s help, I wouldn’t have been able to become as successful in school like this. It was my duty to be a worthy boyfriend for Kaede, and at the same time do my best to repay this favor.

“I hope we get to be in the same class next year. I wouldn’t want to be in the same class as you two, though.”

“Don’t be so lonely, Shinji. The four of us together with Otsuki-san are more fun, right? What about that double date we were talking about before?”

“Hahahaha! You’ve got to be kidding me, Yuya. Are you trying to make me and Akiho suffer from sugar overdose? I can’t let you two interfere with our date.”

“Hey, hey. You’re the one who said you wanted to have a double date. And sugaring you? I guess you and Otsuki-san are a similar kind of a super lovely couple.”

“Shut up, you meotoppuru! The difference between the lovey-dovey stuff between Akiho and me and your lovey-doveyness is about the same as the difference between a cup of cheap coffee and a caramel Frappuccino! That’s why I’m not going on a double date with you!”

What was with that analogy? Wasn’t there too much of a difference between a sugar-free coffee and a caramel Frappuccino?

“I-I-I’m in trouble, Shin-kun! I mean, help me, Shin-kun!”

As I was about to call out to Shinji to protest again, I heard Otsuki-san’s voice from the hallway, barging in and screaming for help. What was with all the noise? The end of the day meeting was going to start soon, couldn’t you wait until then?

“Akiho? Are you done with class? I’m not finished here yet, can you wait a little longer?”

“I can’t wait! Because Kaede is smiling and swooning all the time, staring at and touching her watch!”

I see. Kaede, you’re taking such good care of the watch I gave you. I’m glad to hear that you’re doing that even without me here.

“... I didn’t need to ask who gave it to her. But, I still asked her. Sure

enough, ‘Yuya-kun gave me a present for White Day. Ehehe. He chose a cat-shaped watch because it was cute like a kitten. What do you think? Isn’t it very pretty?’ That’s what she said! Kaede’s silly smile is adorable, though! She’s in love with that watch so much, I’m about to get overloaded by sugar!”

Wasn’t it Otsuki-san’s fault for daring to ask something that didn’t need to be asked? Hey, Shinji. Why are you staring at me there? Isn’t it wrong of you to look at me accusingly?

“A watch as a gift on White Day... I see. So that’s why you didn’t go to karaoke with us after the exam. That Yuya gave her a present... you really love Hitotsuba-san, don’t you, Yuya?”

“... What the heck. It’s Kaede, and of course I love her, so what’s the problem?”

“Haa... I don’t like it when you say such things so naturally. But does that make you happy, Hitotsuba-san?”

Why does Kaede’s name come up there? I turned around and saw her standing there, out of breath and with a red face.

“Akiho-chan! What are you blabbering on about when I thought you suddenly disappeared! It’s supposed to be a secret that I was dere-derely looking at my watch!”

What, you were not smiling and swooning, you were dere-derely? Well, I’m happy either way.

“B-b-but anyways, Yuya-kun! I love you a lot too, Yuya-kun! But it’s embarrassing, so please don’t say it in public!”

No, that was going to boomerang back on you, Kaede. I’m sure that was what all of my classmates thought, except for me. But she didn’t notice, and grabbed Otsuki-san by the neck, who still didn’t want to leave, and dragged her away. Like a storm.

“S\*\*\*w you, you meotoppuru.”

“That’s an exaggeration, you bakappuru.”

Just as we both sighed, the homeroom teacher arrived and the end-of-term meeting began.

When I got home and met up with Kaede, she was even more red in the face than before. She seemed to have realized that what she had said was a public confession.

“If there was a hole, I’d go in it. Yuya-kun... can I spoil you a lot today?”

“Today, too? But well, of course it’s fine. Come on, let’s go home.”

Taking Kaede’s slumped hand, we went home.

By the way, I was ranked ninth in the exam.

# Chapter 72 Panicking on my lap by seeing dinosaurs

‘I love you so much, Yuya-kun!’ As soon as she got home, she exclaimed that and demanded a kiss.

“Yuya-kun. Kiss? No super-duper sweet kiss?”

“... Welcome back, Kaede.”

“Yes! I’m home, Yuya-kun!”

We put our arms around each other’s waist and kissed deeply. Unlike when we said ‘I’m off,’ this kiss was deep and sweet, so dense that it made my brain fuzzy. Kaede wasn’t satisfied with a normal kiss anymore, and she aggressively engaged in that act. But of course, it was the same for me.

“Ah... I can’t do this anymore... Yuya-kun, you’re too good at kissing...”

Kaede’s eyes glazed over and she pulled her mouth away, declaring that she was giving up. The transparent thread that hung down at that moment showed the depth of the act.

“I think I can do my best to cook dinner with this for now! Yuya-kun, please relax!”

In no time at all, Kaede was back on her feet, picked up a shopping bag from the supermarket she had stopped at on her way home, and headed for the kitchen. She changed into her loungewear and started to cook, finishing the pot-au-feu I had told her I would make. I just watched them and washed the



dishes. I felt so pathetic.

After finishing Kaede's special roast beef, what we were currently doing was watching a movie on the internet as usual on the sofa.

Today's choice was the first memorable panic movie that shared the same universe in Jurassic theme park. Recently, a new film had been made called Jurassic World. There were pros and cons, but for me, I liked all the new changes.

"N-no! If you jump out so easily, then! Look! Aaaaah! There it is!"

Kaede had said she knew the title but had never seen it before, so we decided to watch it and was happy to see that she reacted as I expected. Just don't make your stomach tighten up every time you scream.

"This is scary... scarier than I expected... Yuya-kun, you tricked me!"

"It's tight. You're pressing too tightly, so loosen up, Kaede..."

Kaede looked at me as if she was peeking out from below. I explained what kind of situation I was in, and Kaede was lying down with her head on my lap. In other words, a lap pillow. She also reacted to the noise of the play and hugged me, putting all her strength into it. Such was the state of affairs. I patted her head to try to calm her down, but to little effect. Rather, it was because the scene on the other side of the screen was of a T-Rex biting a man's head off during a bathroom break.

"KYAAHHH!!!"

It was one of the most famous scenes in the movie. I had seen it many times, so in a way I didn't really feel affected, but I couldn't blame Kaede for panicking when seeing it for the first time. But I wondered if she would be okay. After this, there was a tense scene in the kitchen with a small carnivorous dinosaur called a velociraptor.

"I-I-I can't go to the bathroom alone at night after seeing this! Yuya-kun, please follow me!"

“It’s not like we’re watching a horror movie... you’re overreacting, Kaede.”

“T-then, I hope you’ll never let go of me and go to sleep tonight! And I’ll never leave you! I’ll stick so much with you!”

Wasn’t that what you always do? But I nodded my head with a smile and didn’t make any insensitive comments. It made me happy to sleep with Kaede in my arms. I wish I could hug her to sleep all year round, no matter the season.

“Oh, but for later! Can I get into another position instead of the lap pillow? I mean, this is fine, but I’d like to have Yuya-kun squeezing me more, or rather... I’m scared, can you do that for me?”

“Yeah, I get it. What do you want me to do?”

“Yuya-kun, you can stay as you are. I’ll— unshooto [TL: In english]. Yes, it’s fine now! Yuya-kun, please give me a hug!”

Kaede’s action was simple and straightforward. Instead of sitting on the soft sofa, she climbed onto my lap. I felt a strange thrill as I became aware of the feel of Kaede’s plump a\*s, but I wrapped my arms around her waist and held her tightly as requested.

“Ehehe. I’ve actually always wanted to watch a movie in this position. This way, no matter how scary the dinosaurs are, I’ll be fine! Now, come and get me!”

Don’t go crazy on my lap, Kaede. When I hugged her tightly so that she doesn’t slip off, I felt the texture of her enchanting marshmallow body more than usual, which made it rather difficult to concentrate on the movie.

“R-run to... oh, but not that way! Ah... yes! You’ll be fine over there! Come on, hurry up!”

As I hugged Kaede, who was enjoying the movie as if she was a child, my evil thoughts were blown away. So I hugged Kaede gently all the way until the movie was over.

I like the Kaede who was s\*\*y and inappropriate for her age, but I also liked the Kaede who was like a child who was innocently excited. I wonder what would happen if she runs into Rika-chan. I think they might get along better than I think.

With these thoughts in mind, I enjoyed watching the movie.

# Chapter 73 Dreamy Kaedes

## Bedtime Stories

Once the final exams were over, the rest of the trimester was like a digestion game. The graduation and closing ceremonies of the seniors had been successfully completed, and spring break was upon us. And after this, the second year of high school life would begin.

“No... it’s no good. Yuya-kun... that part is... no good.”

“... Kaede...”

“Ahh! More! Please keep doing it!”

Kaede’s body twisted and squirmed. She closed her legs tightly as if she was embarrassed, but she kept squirming and moving as if she was enduring something. Her cheeks seemed to be getting redder and redder.

“I love you, Yuya-kun! I love you so much! So make more love... with me...”

Kaede appealed in a sorrowfully pitiful voice. My heart jumped up and down. I wanted to hug Kaede right now if she were to say that directly to me.

“So, oh... ehehe. Do you prefer to be one eaten, Yuya-kun? Do you like to play where I’m the wolf and Yuya-kun is the rabbit?”

“...”

Kaede was drooling while hugging a pillow. If you just look at her, she

looked cute, but what she kept muttering was just too much. Why am I being eaten? Well, there's a part of me that thinks it's not so bad.

“If Yuya-kun wants it... ghehe. I'm going to do my best!”

In what kind of way will you be doing your best? It would be interesting to let it go and watch it, but if I don't stop her soon, won't it be bad later?

“Aah! Those eyes of yours tell everything. You're looking at me like I'm an idiot, wondering how I'm going to do it! I'll show you... my true colors.”

Okay. Let's wake you up before you get serious in your dreams and attack me. I don't want her to sulk because we have a date today.

“Kaede. Kaede! It's about time you got up. We're going on a date today, you know?”

“What do you mean? Are you saying that you don't want me to give Yuya-kun my special massage and make you feel good now?”

Oi, oi! What the h\*\*l is that kind of massage!? I'm really curious to see what you mean by that! But no. I have to be mindful here!

“I'm curious to see what that massage of yours is like, but let's not delve deeper into that right now, okay? We're going to the shrine today to pray that we'll be in the same class, remember?”

“... Hau? A date...? A visit?”

“That's right! You promised you'd go today since my club activities are canceled too. So come on, wake up—, Kaede!”

I shook Kaede's shoulder hard. Having woken up a little earlier than she did, I gently peeled Kaede from her embrace, washed her face, and came back to prepare breakfast, but she was still in a daze. On the contrary, she seemed to be happy and tried to play games with me, which was quite a problem. If you don't wake up soon, I can't keep up with my schedule!

“Huh...? Yuya-kun? Are those... pajamas? Could it be a dream?”

“Yes, that’s right. I don’t know what kind of dream you’ve been dreaming about—, but we should get up and have breakfast soon, right?”

“Yu-Yu-Yuya-kun! Did I say anything? I hope I didn’t say anything weird!”

Immediately, Kaede raised herself up and grabbed my shoulders, shaking me. I’d like you to stop shaking so violently, it makes me dizzy.

“It, it’s okay. Y-you didn’t say anything... weird, right?”

“D-d-don’t answer it as a question! You should know! Or rather, you were listening to me! Please be honest and confess!”

“...Oh, well. No, I think you said something about playing wolf and rabbit or giving you a special massage or something...? Ahahahaha.”

Suspect Yoshizumi Yuya. Confessed easily.

I wasn’t able to lie if Kaede stared at me with her moist eyes instead of shaking me. In fact, even if I were to deceive her, she wouldn’t stop pursuing that topic. Then it would be better to confess as soon as possible.

“Ugh... Yuya-kun heard me talking in my sleep, which is embarrassing...”

“You were talking in your sleep, but still remember what you said?”

“Yes...what can I say...I was in a dreamy state and I kind of remember everything... ugh... I can’t get married like this.”

‘Uwuwu’, Kaede broke down in tears. If you couldn’t tell whether it was a dream or reality, there was nothing you could do. This happens sometimes. Besides...

“Don’t say that. Kaede will definitely be my wife... ..right? Just kidding!”

“... ‘Just kidding’, what’s with that?”

Err, I was trying to cheer Kaede up, but I guess I flipped a weird switch! No, I wasn’t really joking; I loved Kaede so much that I would want her to be my

wife if possible.

“Thank you, Yuya-kun. That’s right, you still haven’t given me a good morning kiss. You haven’t done that, have you?”

“W-well... good morning, Kaede.”

“Yes. Good morning, Yuya-kun—mmm.”

Morning kisses were like the peck of birds when expressing their affection, overlapping and separating. It was a gentle kiss that conveyed love in a refreshing way, different from the dense, lustful kisses of the moonlit night that became a regular part of our bedtime routine.

“Fufu. It’s completely different in the morning and at night, but the feeling is the same.”

Kaede looked at me with a gorgeous smile, like a cherry blossom in full bloom. I wish I could be with her not only at home, but at school as well.

“Then I guess I’ll have to go ask God for a good push today!”

God, I beg you. Please put me in the same class as Kaede for the second year.

# Chapter 74 Making a Wish at the Shrine of Marriage

After a quick breakfast, Kaede took out some clothes from the wardrobe, excited about what to wear today. I wore a simple T-shirt and jeans. To be honest, I didn't feel very enthusiastic since I was wearing a simple spring jacket over the already plain outfit.

“Yuya-kun is tall and stylish, so simple outfits like that suit you very well, and if anything, you even look like a model, right?”

Kaede told me to be confident, but I wasn't quite sure what to think. Well, I couldn't spend and wasn't interested in spending money on fashion, but as long as Kaede said it was cool, I was fine with it.

“Thanks for waiting! Well then, Yuya-kun, let's go!”

Kaede chose a white sweatshirt and a long skirt with a flower pattern. It was a springtime outfit that brought out Kaede's cuteness and loveliness. In contrast, her hair was styled in a half-updo, which made her look more mature than usual. It wasn't only the outfit, but also the hairstyle that made her look so much cuter than usual.

“Well, what do you think? Is it pretty?”

I came back to myself when Kaede's voice asked me a little anxiously. I couldn't help it, she was so cute that I had quit thinking.

“Of course! You look so good and pretty! No, I think Kaede looks cute no matter what she wears, but the floral skirt takes it to an even cuter level! As



for me, I'd love to see Kaede in pants, but Kaede in a long skirt is so dainty and cute, it raises your cuteness to 120%! It makes me want to protect her, you know!"

"Yu-Yuya-kun!?"

"But, but! After all, it's your hair that also looks great on you! You usually wear it down, but Kaede with a tied up hair look is really amazing too! But, I don't know if I'd call it mature and cute? Or, is it even both? Yes, it's both cute and mature at the same time—"

"STOOOP!! No more of that, Yuya-kun! If you say any more than that, I'll die of embarrassment!"

Kaede's cheeks reddened as she held my mouth with her hand, not letting me say any more. Why!? I was just emphasizing how cute Kaede was today!

"Yuya-kun, you idiot! That's it! I can't! I'm so happy, but I can't stand the embarrassment!"

Kaede smacked my chest in protest. I love the way she was trying so hard. I couldn't help but smile and pat her on the head. Then Kaede turned her head and became quiet.

"Hauu... that's not fair. If you stroke me like that, I'll be too happy to say anything."

Her reaction was so cute that I couldn't help but give her a big hug and pat her on the back. This meant that I won't be able to leave the house for any length of time, but I couldn't be bothered with time in the face of overwhelming cuteness!

"Mou... Yuya-kun's an idiot... but I'm happy you called me cute."

Kaede also put her arms around my waist and pulled me closer.

I stroked her head so much that I went well over my scheduled departure time, but I was delighted too, so there was no harm in that!

\* \* \* \* \*

We boarded a train and headed for a shrine in the central business district, famous for its matchmaking. This shrine was popular as a power spot for lovers, and even though it was a weekday, it was crowded with young people, and there was a long line of people waiting to pay their respects.

“It’s crowded even though it’s a weekday. It is indeed famous for its matchmaking.”

“I know there are a lot of students and young people like us, but... what’s with those three guys in suits? I wonder if they’re skipping work?”

The three men in suits standing in line a little ahead of us were sadly out of place in the line. They ranged in age from 20s to late 40s, like bosses and subordinates. But the conversations I heard were interesting, to say the least.

“This is the year I’m getting married! Nishi-san, please introduce me to someone!”

“No, that’s impossible. Because Chief Katou wants an Armenian, right?”

“That’s right! Aren’t Armenians cute!?”

I didn’t even know where Armenia was, but at least I knew that the reason why that group of people in suits came to pay their respects at this shrine was the immature child-like of their elder and superior, the section chief. Is that okay with you, businessman? I mean, isn’t your boss who likes Armenians a little too fanatical about it?

“Fufu. There are so many different people here. This will keep us occupied while we wait.”

Kaede smiled and squeezed my arm. Kaede’s white sweatshirt was large in size, so when you got close to her, you could feel the soft, plump texture. In addition, it was kind of embarrassing to fold your arms so proudly in such a crowded place.

“What’s with that couple in the back! They look so happy, they’re holding

each other's hands! They're showing off! Blast them!"

"A handsome and beautiful couple, aren't they? Why would they come to a shrine for marriage? Are they flexing on us?"

"How nice! I wish I could make out with a cute girl too!"

"Chief... I'm embarrassed, please be a little quiet."

The youngest of the three men was smiling and trying to reduce the noise made by the Chief. My eyes met his and he bowed to me. I bobbed my head lightly in return. Good luck, salaryman!

We listened to the amusing conversation of the businessmen, and in no time, our turn came around. A little nervously, we threw in the money, rang the bell, and bowed twice. Then we also clapped twice and prayed to God.

I hope that next year I will be in the same class as Kaede.

I hope to be with Kaede for many more years to come.

These were the two things I wished for. When I glanced at Kaede standing next to me, she seemed to be thinking of her wish very hard. I waited for Kaede to finish her wish, and then bowed one last time to end my visit.

## Chapter 75 If your wish doesnt come true God is a shady guy

“What did you wish for, Yuya-kun?”

As soon as we finished our prayers and rejoined hands, Kaede immediately asked me. Well, it was a classic trope to ask this, but you didn’t have to follow it dutifully, you know?

“It’s fine. It’s not like it’s going to decrease. If you’re embarrassed, I’ll tell you! I am, you know... fufu. There are two things: I wish to be in the same class as Yuya-kun and I wish to be with Yuya-kun forever.”

“... It’s the same for me. Exactly the same. I wished that I could be in the same class as Kaede, and that I can be with her for a long time to come. That was what I’ve been asking with all my heart and soul.”

I thought I’d be happy if our wishes somehow fit one or another, but I didn’t expect them to match so well. I was surprised and impressed at the same time. If God doesn’t grant our wishes despite us thinking so much of each other, then he must be some s\*\*\*\*t who hates reality.

“If we both wish for the same thing, I’m sure God will make it happen! But what if he doesn’t make it come true?”

“Let’s see. If he doesn’t make it happen, I’ll go around telling people that the god here is a dark-hearted, shady fellow.”

“Mou, what’s with that? He’s the god of marriage, so I’m sure he’s on our side! But since we’re here, why don’t we take a look at a talisman or

something?”

Kaede took me by the hand and we headed for the crowded store, where there were many charms and straps. There were so many different colors, patterns, and types that it was fun to look at them.

“Fufu. Which one shall it be? We’re already tied together, so I’d prefer something other than a marriage bond. Oh, how about this one! Wouldn’t it be perfect for us in the future?”

Confidently, I picked up a plump, round-shaped talisman. But when I saw the words written on it, I reflexively chopped Kaede’s head. Tei.

“Ow! What are you doing, Yuya-kun! Why did you hit me!?”

“Sorry. It’s just, Kaede. That amulet, would you mind reading what it says?”

“Eh? I’m praying for a safe delivery, is there a problem?”

“It’s rather nothing but problems! Why are you praying for a safe delivery here!? We’re still in high school, you know!? Isn’t it too early to be thinking about it!?”

Among the many talismans available, Kaede chose with a smug look on her face one that prayed for a safe delivery. It was too early to be praying for a safe delivery for us who had only just kissed. Moreover, when I read the description:

“Praying for a safe delivery and the birth of a healthy child.”

That was what it said. You could see that it was useless to us, couldn’t you? Don’t you think we would be needing this at least after we get married and my last name becomes Hitotsuba?

“Mou... I thought it was a good idea, but if you’re against it that much, I’m not going to buy it... right now. But I’m looking forward to the day when I’ll need this eventually, you know.”

Finally, Kaede added a big smile on her face and hugged me tightly in her

arms. I scratched my cheek to cover up the embarrassment of imagining that future. I'm sure my face was now as red as a volcano before erupting.

“Hey, Nishi-san. Can I go kick that high schooler in the rear? It's fine, right? Don't flirt with her! Can I go and assault him?”

“I'll go along with you, Katou-san. If we don't hit the source of this sudden sweetening of the air, we're going to be diabetic.”

“Nishi-san, Katou-san. Please, please don't do this. I know it's sweet, but let's go. Here, the fortune! Let's go draw a fortune!”

It was the three guys in suits from earlier who were looking at us with hatred. The youngest one was desperately coaxing the section chief and his subordinate, who had flames of jealousy in their eyes, and pushing them back to lead them to the fortune corner. Thank you for your hard work.

“If you don't want to pray for safe delivery, which one do you want, Yuya-kun? Home safety? Academic success? None of them are so great.”

No, I think both are useful. Home safety is good because we live together, and academic success is good because we are students. But there was something that fits both of our wishes perfectly. I picked that up.

“How about this? ‘A talisman for fulfilling one's heart's desire,’ So this amulet is praying for our wishes to be fulfilled, and I guess it couldn't be more appropriate for us.”

I hope we can be in the same class. So that we can be together forever. There was nothing better than a good luck charm that contained a prayer for the fulfillment of your heartfelt wishes. It also came in two colors, white and navy blue, so we both could have one.

“... So Yuya-kun and I have a matching amulet that prays for our wishes to come true. Fufu. After all, Yuya is a romantic, isn't he? Very nice.”

“I bought a matching bear, but that one sits at home. I wanted something that I could have with me all the time. I don't know if that good luck charm is a

good solution.”

“I think it’s good. That shows how much we care about each other! I can feel it.”

Kaede then picked up the two amulets and paid for them. She did it so naturally that I couldn’t interrupt her. I would have bought my own.

“Since it’s the same prayer, I thought we should buy them together. Yes, the dark blue one is Yuya-kun’s. I’ll wear mine on my bag when I get home.”

“Yeah, I guess so. But if Shinji and Otsuki-san see this, they’ll make fun of us again.”

It was easy to imagine the scene. I’m sure it will be Otsuki-san who would notice that they were matching, and would bombard us with questions. And then Kaede would talk about it in an excited way and I would be cursed by Shinji as meotoppuru. Yeah, that was how it would proceed.

“That’s perfect, we’ll surely now be in the same class!”

Compared to my unfounded fears, Kaede seemed to be having a good time. It wouldn’t be the first time I’ve been teased by those two, so there’s no point in worrying about it. They might not even ask.

“And then. I hope you’ll stay with me for a long time to come.”

“Of course, Kaede. We’ll be together forever.”

‘I love you’, I added in my mind. But I was too embarrassed to say it.

I put the amulet away in my bag and we left the shrine, holding hands with our fingers tightly intertwined so that we would not be separated.

# Chapter 76 Kaedes Fashion Show

Over lunch, we discussed our plans for the rest of the day. To be honest, we had already done the prayers we wanted to do the most, so what should we do now? Kaede said she wanted to do some shopping, but I wondered if there was anything she wanted to buy.

“I’m thinking that it’s time to get a new one. If I’m going to buy something, I’d like to hear what Yuya-kun likes.”

“Hmm? My favorite? Kaede, what are you trying to buy?”

What is it? Is it spring clothes? Today’s long skirt was cute and neat, but I think tight pants would look great on Kaede, who had a great figure. I’d like to see Kaede in a so-called beauty-type outfit.

“Fufu. It’s obvious, isn’t it? It’s... un-der-we-ar~“

I almost fell out of my chair when she put her face close to mine and whispered in my ear so that no one would hear. What are you saying, Kaede!?

“Eh, is it not okay? I’d like to get a few of them, so I’m thinking I’d like to wear something that Yuya-kun thinks is cute... can you help me choose?”

Hey, hey, hey. Kaede would wear the underwear that I think is cute! I’m not sure if I’m happy or embarrassed about that, but would I ever get to have this kind of chance to see them worn!?

“Please don’t worry. I’ll wear it every night after my bath and give you a viewing party just for Yuya-kun.”



“—!?!? Kaede!? What are you talking about!?”

“Yuya-kun. If you shout loudly, you’ll disturb the other customers, so you have to be quiet, okay?”

I don’t want to be told that by you! Eh, a viewing party after the bath!? I would be looking at Kaede wearing the new underwear I picked out for her, on her hot body after a hot bath!? What was with that sophisticated elegance!?

“Kaede... how serious are you?”

“Fufu. So, how serious do you think I am? Yuya-kun, what do you think of how serious I am?”

Ahaha. Even Kaede, as expected, wouldn’t do that, right? Eh, you wouldn’t, would you?

“Answering is... a no-go.”

I think you’re using it wrong.

\* \* \* \* \*

Unexpectedly, Kaede did as she declared, and as soon as we entered the mall, she pulled me by the hand and headed for the underwear section.

“Oh, um... Kaede? Seriously, am I going to be in here with you?”

“Yes, can’t we? If I’m going to go to the trouble of putting it on, I want it to match Yuya-kun’s taste, so please give me your frank opinion.”

Apparently, I don’t have the right to refuse. After swallowing my spit, I made up my mind and stepped into the impenetrable territory.

It was truly a paradise. Underwear of every color was on display. There were a few young female customers here and there, but Kaede was the only one who came in with her boyfriend. Thanks to this, the stares that pierced me were painful.

“What color do you like, Yuya? Or which pattern? Do you still like pretty floral patterns? Or is it the lace type that gives you a mature woman’s look? Is there such a thing as a ribbon bra? Wow... they’re all so cute, Yuya-kun!”

Don’t shake me there. I beg you, don’t do it. I could only agree that all of them were cute and beautiful, but choosing which of them would suit Kaede was a painful process because it forced me to think a lot.

For example, the orange floral underwear set worn by the mannequin in front of me. The colors were pretty and the floral pattern wasn’t too flamboyant, but the design was perfectly balanced. The mannequin was wearing a camisole, which gave it an indescribably bewitching look. If Kaede comes out of the bath dressed like this...

I shook my head to get rid of the evil thoughts, and turned my attention to the mannequin next to me. This time, it was a passionate rouge color with a mature atmosphere. The design was simple, but the roses on the side of the cup gave it a feminine beauty and a strong will which couldn’t easily be captured. However, what surprised me was that this mannequin was wearing a thong. If Kaede were to come at me in this fiery underwear and in a panther pose—

No, no, no. Don’t imagine it. Either would be fine, but it would mean the extinction of my rationality. That was not going to happen until I said hello to my father-in-law.

“Yuya-kun, are you okay? Your face is much redder than before... Is this the kind of thing you like, Yuya-kun?”

“Hya!? Ka-Ka-Kaede! No, that’s not it! I just happened to have a mannequin in front of me, and I was just imagining what Kaede would look like in something like this!”

“So, what did you think of me in these underwear, Yuya-kun? Was it cute?”

“Of course! That was just insanely erotic and cute! I’m pretty sure I’d be screwed if you pressed on to me with that... you know...”

What the h\*\*l am I saying!? Why did I just tell you what I honestly thought!? And what about the ‘erotic and cute’? I know I’ve described it like that, but even the bath towel, the tight school swimsuit, and no bra pajamas were quite erotic and cute.

“I-I see. Is it erotic and cute... uu. I didn’t expect that Yuya-kun liked this kind of underwear... I didn’t expect that. But!”

Kaede’s cheeks turned vermillion as she looked at me with the eyes of a determined warrior and silently picked up the two underwear sets that I had fantasized about wearing on the mannequins and headed for the fitting room. I was not allowed to enter from here, so I decided to wait outside.

More than ten minutes later. Kaede went straight to the cash register to pay the bill and rushed over to me. Your face seems redder than before, are you okay?

“Ehehe. When I tried it on, it was even cuter than I thought it would be, so I bought both of them. Now I can make Yuya-kun fall crazy in love with me again!”

“Don’t worry. I’ve already fallen in love with Kaede more than enough.”

It was not that I lost my rationality every time, it was more like I was overly excited by it. I’m about to lose confidence in my ability to be satisfied with just a cute hug and a kiss.

“Y-yes! I took a selfie in the fitting room. Do you want to see the picture? Would you like to see it?”

Kaede’s face reddened even more and she came at me. I don’t know what it was, but I couldn’t help but wonder if she had gone into a teasing mode where she couldn’t help but make me blush.

“No... not a picture, but a live one... okay? I’ll look forward to that time, Kaede.”

“—!!!? Yuya-kun!?”

Fuhahaha! I've rejected my reasoning and summoned Kaede's cute, embarrassed face! Don't think I would always be beaten!

"Mou... if you insist so much, I'll definitely hold a viewing party. You'll have to be prepared for that."

Kaede said a little sulkily with her mouth pouting. With such a return blow, my life was successfully drained to zero.

# Chapter 77 Kaedes Eighteenth Birthday

After completing one of the biggest missions ever to choose Kaede's underwear. We were taking a break at the food lounge. Even though my life was down to zero, it was still past 3 pm. It was too early to go home.

“Do you want to go see a movie or something? Have you seen anything interesting?”

“Hmm... there's a thing, but what I want to watch is the final chapter of a trilogy. The annual movie version of Elementary School Detective is also coming out next month... but other than that, there's nothing else that really interests me. What do you have, Kaede?”

I really wanted to see the final chapter of the theatrical trilogy movie of the work in which seven chosen sorcerers and their followers try to kill each other, but I couldn't, because I promised to go see this one with Shinji. [TL: No idea.] I wouldn't mind seeing it twice, but it would probably be boring for Kaede, who hadn't seen chapters one and two.

“I'm fine with that, as long as I can watch what Yuya-kun wants to watch with me. Hmm... that's a problem.”

Kaede groaned and made a thoughtful face. To be honest, I was happy just being with Kaede like this. While I was thinking about this, I received a message on my phone. The sender was Shinji. And it came with a video file.

‘Oh, by the way, I forgot to send you a video of the last time we went to

karaoke, so I will. Hitotsuba-san waas so cute.'

Hoh. Did you see a cute side of Kaede that I didn't know about, Shinji? Is that what's in this video? I'll have to take a look at it right away!

"Love is thrill, shock, suspense~" [TN: See Koi wa Thrill, Shock, Suspense. [https://www.detectiveconanworld.com/wiki/Koi\\_wa\\_Thrill,\\_Shock,\\_Suspense](https://www.detectiveconanworld.com/wiki/Koi_wa_Thrill,_Shock,_Suspense)]

"—Buh-hahaha!!"

"Yu, Yuya-kun! What's the matter with you!? Eh, is thisss—!?!?"

I couldn't help but burst out laughing. This was the same song that the famous elementary school detective danced to in the OP! In the video, Kaede not only sang very well, but she also danced very well and it looked like she had been having a great time.

"What's wrong with that video! Oh, that was Higure-kun! That reminds me that he was holding his phone with Akiho-chan with a grinning face... Yuya-kun, please delete that video!"

"Why? Kaede sings really well and she's a good dancer, so I want to keep it. Or maybe it's also due to the music selection. Interesting, isn't it?"

"Why is it in question form!? That's what this song is about! Akiho-chan forced it in! It was an absurd act! I didn't put it in, you know!"

In spite of her desperate excuses, Kaede in the video was dancing with joy. She even managed to copy the song perfectly. This meant that this song and dance was Kaede's favorite.

"I also wanted to sing a cool song like Gurenge [TL: The OP of Demon Slayer.] or something similar, but Akiho-chan only put in songs like this... gosh."

That song that was a huge hit? It was a cool song, that was for sure. If Kaede sang that, I would listen to her.

“Ugh... if it comes to this, Yuya-kun, we’re going to karaoke now! I’ll show you how cool I am at singing! And I’m going to take a video of it and send it to Higure-kun and Akiho-chan!”

‘Let’s do that, yeah, let’s do that.’ Without asking my opinion, Kaede stood up and trudged off. I hurried after her and held her hand to keep her close.

“Come on, let’s go, Yuya-kun! From here on, this is my stage! Listen to my song! That’s what I’m talking about!”

“There’s some kind of special effects hero or intergalactic diva mixed in with the story, but I’ll gladly follow Kaede if I can hear her sing live.”

In the video, there was a lot of noise and it was hard to hear some parts, so if I could hear her sing live, that would be great. And I want to see Kaede singing in a cool way in my own eyes. So to be honest, I don’t want to send it to Shinji and the others.

“Mou. Yuya-kun is very possessive, isn’t he? Fufu. But don’t worry. The song I’m going to send to Akiho and the others is ‘Bright red lip’. The elementary school detective is also dancing in that song, so it’s a perfect decision.”

“No, that’s cool enough too.”

“Tsk, ts. It’s sweet, Yuya-kun. Sure, this is good too, but I have a song that will grab Yuya-kun’s heart even more than this. For the next two hours. Please get mesmerized by me, okay?”

The confident and fearless smile on Kaede’s face made me unconsciously fall in love with her again. Oh no, I want to be hugged by such a cool Kaede.

“What kind of songs do you sing, Yuya-kun? Is it something like ‘In○eruno’? Or is it ‘Good○bye’? [TL: I’m going to end myself if I see one more song reference.] I’m really looking forward to hearing Yuya-kun’s voice! I’m really looking forward to listening to Yuya-kun’s voice!”

Eh, am I going to sing too? I mean, those two song choices were pretty hard,

weren't they?

“Let's make a video of Yuya singing, too! But don't worry. I won't send it to anyone, so don't worry. It will only be for personal viewing.”

I'm more worried about that one, Kaede.



# Chapter 78 Punishment Time

In contrast to me who was mentally exhausted and limping, Kaede came home with a smiling face. There was only one reason why I could be so tired.

“Yuya-kun, please get well soon. You don’t have to worry about that.”

“Then can you delete the video of me that you took at karaoke right now?”

“I can’t do that.”

That was a quick answer! I sighed and plopped down on the table. I didn’t think she would actually capture me singing on video. You never know when or where it might leak out, so please delete it!

“I didn’t expect Yuya-kun to sing that Japan’s famous song. And to be able to sing it perfectly in the original key... it was awesome, to say the least!”

Stop it! We all get excited at times, don’t we? Karaoke was hard at first, but the more I sang, the more I got excited, and at the peak of the song, I always ended up turning red! In addition, I was able to produce a super high-pitched voice that I usually couldn’t.

“Shinji-kun told me. I never thought I’d be able to hear it live, and since I was able to capture it on video, can I send it to Akiho-chan?”

“No. That’s the only thing that definitely isn’t allowed. If you send it to Otsuki-san, there will be no goodnight kisses.”

“Ugh... You didn’t even give me a “I’m home” kiss, and now you’re not giving me a “good night” kiss!? Isn’t that just too much!? I demand that the trial be done again!”

Kaede slapped the table with a bang and demanded a retrial. As much as I'd like to kiss her, I'm sorry but I can't accept it, considering that there was still a video of that. I always ended up being swallowed by Kaede's momentum, but I can't lose!

"I see. So you're going to ignore my request. I understand. If you're going to act like that, Yuya-kun, I have an idea!"

Kaede stands up vigorously with a loud bang again.

"... What are you going to do?"

"I will send Yuya-kun's high-tension enthusiastic singing video to Akiho-chan and Higurashi-kun without any questions!"

I raised my head. I looked up and saw Kaede with a look of triumph on her face. I'm sure the phone in her hand was ready to send a video to the two of them at any time. I had to stop her from doing that. But I'm kind of annoyed that she was going to do this as usual. — I want to give that a shot.

"Fufu. Now, Yuya-kun. If you don't want me to send the video to the two of you, it's a little late, but please give me a "I'm home" kiss! If you do, I'll delete this video, okay?"

What do you want to do now? Kaede said, agitatedly. I heard a thread snapping in my head. If you're going to go that far, I'm going to have to get serious. Even if I might regret it, it was too late.

"... Okay, Kaede."

I lowered the tone of my voice and said the words and slowly stood up. Perhaps noticing my subtle change, Kaede's smirking expression changes to a suspicious one. I silently closed the distance between us.

"Yu, Yuya-kun? What's wrong with you?"

Perhaps sensing my intimidation, Kaede's voice trembled slightly as she retreated in time with my advance. But I dared to remain silent and approached Kaede one step at a time.

“Yuya-kun...? Your face is scary, isn’t it? Could it be that you’re angry?”

“Angry? Why? I just want to kiss Kaede, okay? Rather, why are you running away?”

“Because Yuya-kun’s face...”

Hehe, hehehe. I had finally cornered Kaede against the wall. Now you have nowhere to run. Now, it was time to punish the kitten for getting carried away.

“What’s the matter, Kaede? Why are you running away? Don’t you want me to kiss you?”

“Uh... that’s, uh... I’d like you to, but...”

Kaede’s voice suddenly became thin. I wondered where her earlier bravado had disappeared. I lift her chin with my right hand and force her to look at me.

“Look at me properly, you know. You want me to kiss you, don’t you? You can’t do that if you’re looking down, okay?”

“—!!!? Yu-Yuya-kun!?”

When Kaede panicked at my chin-lifting gesture, she turned red and tried to run away, so I put my left hand on the wall to block her way. This was what they called a wall-kabedon.

“——— ! ! ? ? ”

“You can’t run away. Otherwise you won’t be able to kiss me, can you?”

“Yuya-kun...”

“I love you, Kaede.”

Staring into her beautiful obsidian eyes, I kissed Kaede gently. Kaede’s

expression immediately changed to one of debauchery. But this was not the end of my punishment.

I wrapped my hands around her waist and put my lips on hers again, waiting for Kaede's mouth to open naturally until she couldn't hold back anymore and intertwined our tongues.

“Nnngh... Yuuya-kun...I love you... nnngh... I love you.”

Kaede wrapped her hands around my neck as if to insist that she won't let go while making sweet noises. I hugged her waist even tighter and licked and sucked on her soft cherry-cake-like tongue as if I were licking and melting candy, gently tormenting her.

“Mmm...Yuya...kun. I can't...I... I can't stand up anymore...”

We were enjoying a thick, intimate kiss for so long that my lips were blistered, and then Kaede announced that she was giving up. Kaede was so enraptured that she couldn't stand without my support. I might have overdone it a little, but I laughed and said, ‘I'm sorry.’

“This is a punishment, you know. It's wrong for Kaede to say something like that to test me. If you say you're sorry for getting carried away, I'll forgive you, okay?”

“Un... I got carried away...mmm... I-I'm sorry...”

Even while Kaede was apologizing, I was relentlessly twirling my tongue around hers. Kaede slumped down to the ground, letting out a sweet gasp.

“Ugh...I saw Yuya-kun's true intentions. But... it was really nice. Chin lifting, wall katedon, and intense kissing. It felt great.”

That was strange. It was supposed to be a punishment, but perhaps it awakened something inside Kaede?

“Will you do it again another time, Yuya-kun?”

I swallowed my spit and nodded to Kaede, who invited me with her lustful,

glamorous face.

It wasn't a bad idea for me to be proactive once in a while. No, the problem was that I had been left on my own until now. From now on, I have to lead Kaede more!

“Yuya-kun's intoxicated face, it was so cute, I have to work hard too. Please be prepared for that, okay?”

“... Please go easy on me then.”

# Chapter 79 Request from Taka-san

“Hello, Yuya. It’s me. Are you all right?”

“That’s an old-fashioned scam. I’m calling the police.”

Night. I got out of the bath and was wiping my hair when I got a call from Taka-san. By the way, Kaede was currently taking a bath with me by mistake. We don’t have mixed bathing every day!

“Hey! Don’t do that, that’s not funny! I mean, my phone is registered, so you’ll know it’s me right away!”

“Oh man, Taka-san. I’m just kidding. It’s just the usual greeting. So, what do you want at this hour?”

It was now past 10pm. It was a little late to call even if you were close to someone. I wondered if the content of the message was so important that he needed to talk to me in person instead of just messaging me.

“Oh...I’m sorry to rush you. Can you take care of Rika for the next three days? That’s it. It’s the one big day of the year. You know what I mean.”

“Speaking of that, tomorrow is Taka-san and Harumi’s wedding anniversary. It’s the only day you’re going on a trip together, right?”

Taka-san and Harumi-san love their only daughter, Rika-chan, very much. Taka-san, in particular, was such a foolish parent that he says he wouldn’t want to look her in the eye. The only exception to this was on their wedding anniversary, when the couple spends time together. This was not the first time they had done this, they have been doing it ever since they got married.

“Huh. But didn’t you always leave Rika-chan at Harumi-san’s parents’

house?”

“That’s the thing! Because she didn’t spend enough time with you last time, Rika said, ‘I want to stay at Yuya’s house!’ And she wouldn’t listen. What did I say? ‘I don’t want to leave my precious Rika at a man’s house’, but Rika started crying and Harumi-san said that Yuya would be fine. That’s why I’m calling to ask for your help.”

As a father, he wanted to fulfill my beloved daughter’s adorable request, but Taka-san seemed to be struggling with whether he could fulfill this selfish request. Was he afraid of me taking his precious Rika? I’m all about Kaede. But I’m not going to declare that because it would complicate things again.

But still, the tone of voice conveyed a sense of reluctance, even for a request.

“I mean, in Rika’s mind, it’s already been confirmed that she’s going to stay at your house. I’m sorry to call you after the fact, but can you please take care of her?”

“Hmm... as for me, I don’t mind, but I wonder what Kaede would say about it. I can’t make that decision on my own.”

If Kaede doesn’t like it even if I do, then I’m sorry to say that I can’t accept this offer, even if Taka-san and Rika-chan want it. Because this is – our house.

“Well... you’re living with Hitotsuba’s daughter now, aren’t you? Hey, can you talk some sense into that girl? I don’t want to see Rika in tears first thing in the morning. Please, Yuya.”

“Don’t worry... you should have said something important like that earlier, Taka-san. I’ll be right back. I’ll go check it out.”

I put the call on hold and headed for the bathroom. I went into the changing room and called out to Kaede inside without opening the bathroom door.

“Kaede! Can I have a moment?”

“What is it? Ah! Yuya-kun, are you here by any chance to take a peek? If

that's what you mean, you're more than welcome! Let's get naked together!"

I heard the sound of water splashing, and Kaede came out of the bathtub, completely naked – but I couldn't see her clearly because of the frosted glass.

"Huh? I can't open the door. I can't welcome Yuya-kun with this!"

"That's not it! I didn't come here to peek, nor did I come here to socialize together naked! I just had something I wanted to ask Kaede!"

"—? Something you want to ask me? What is it?"

"I just got a call from Taka-san. They're going on their annual wedding anniversary trip, and they want me to take care of their daughter. Normally, they would leave her at her mother's house, but Rika, their daughter, wanted to stay at our house. So, it's kind of short notice, but he wants me to keep him at home for the next three days starting tomorrow... what do you think?"

When I told her the truth, Kaede's attempts to pry the door open stopped and she became quiet.

"Hey, Yuya-kun. Rika-chan, the daughter of Omichi-san, was it? How old is that girl now?"

Suddenly, Kaede asked me in a serious voice. When I told her that I was in the first grade, she replied, 'I see,' and started mumbling something.

"So she's a first grader, that makes her six years old. It will give me a chance to practice for when I have a child with Yuya-kun. But the question is what she really means when she says that she wants to stay at Yuya-kun's house. The 6 years old is still a girl. Perhaps her future dream is to be Yuya's wife. Mumumu. I can't lose this one. I'm Yuya's wife."

You've been mumbling all sorts of strange things, are you okay, Kaede? What do you mean by practicing for the future? It's too early to tell, though I do hope such a future will eventually come. Also, aren't you reading too much into Rika-chan's true intentions? I mean, are you going to fight Rika?

"...I understand. I've given it a lot of thought, and let's take care of her."



After a moment of silence, Kaede agreed to let Rika come. It was not that I didn't care about the implications of the silence, but for now, I'll take it as a good sign.

"Thanks, Kaede! I'll go tell Taka-san! Sorry to interrupt your bath. You'll have to soak again!"

I left the bathroom and breathed a huge sigh of relief when I told Taka-san that I had gotten her approval. If Kaede said no, I would have to say no, and I could imagine Rika crying the next morning if I did.

"Thank you for your help, Yuya. Now I won't have to watch Rika cry, and I can enjoy my trip in peace! I'll definitely repay you for this!"

"You're overreacting, Taka-san. Don't worry about it."

After that, we talked about the pick-up and drop-off arrangements and ended the call with Taka-san. It was a long call, so by the time it was over, Kaede was out of the bath and ready for bed.

"... Yuya-kun. Please give me a hug."

Are you sulking?

# Chapter 80 Hickeys

After Taka-san's call asking me to take care of his only daughter, Rika-chan, I went to the bedroom and found Kaede waiting for me, looking all sulky.

“... Yuya-kun. Please give me a hug.”

When Kaede said that much, her mouth pouted slightly and she thrust out her hands as if she were trying to lunge forward.

“I'm sorry, I made you wait. Shall we go to bed early?”

“Yuya-kun, hug. Hurry up for a hug. As soon as possible. [TL: In English.]”

So you wanted me to give you a hug as soon as possible. It seemed like a hybrid of sulk mode and sweet mode.

“Oh, really. This spoiled brat can't help it...”

That being said, I'm aware that my mouth was hanging loose. Because how about Kaede, who didn't say anything, her mouth pouting, sitting flat on the bed and asking for a hug? Don't you think she would be very cute? You would surely think so.

“... I won't give up the title of Yuya-kun's wife to anyone.”

When I hugged her tightly, Kaede murmured as if she was declaring war. I couldn't help but laugh at the thought that she was talking to Rika-chan, a first-grader.

“Hey! Why are you laughing at me!? I'm serious! You can't let your guard

down no matter how much of a child they are! A lion does his best even when he's hunting a rabbit!"

Gao! Kaede declared as she bit my neck. The sweet bite, with its perfect balance of pain and pleasure, soon turned into a sucking sensation, marking her as mine. It was a strange sensation that was both tempting and comforting.

"Hmph... Yuya-kun is my husband. I won't... give him to anyone. This is why... hmm. That's what the hickeys are for."

Huh? Are you doing this so that I have a hickey? By the time I realized this fact, it was already too late. Kaede parted her lips, letting the glossy transparent thread drip from my neck, and looked at the mark with satisfaction.

"Fufu. My marking on Yuya-kun is now perfect. Now anyone can tell at a glance who is Yuya-kun's wife."

Then again, Kaede licked the mark she put on me lovingly. If she did that to me, I too wanted to mark her.

I put the tip of my nose against Kaede's neck and enjoyed the smell. The fresh scent of citrus sunk into my nostrils and throughout my body. I stuck my tongue out slightly, wetting the white porcelain skin as I searched for possible marking points. The nape of the neck was as blatant as it possibly could. So the best place to start is...

"Mmm... Yuya-kun? What are you doing? It feels a little bit weird."

Kaede's body twitched at the feel of my tongue crawling over her. Her cheeks were beginning to flush as she checked with her eyes.

"Even I... I want to mark Kaede as my precious one, you know. You'll let me, won't you?"

I didn't hear an answer. I continued to reach Kaede's collarbone area. The sexiness of the delicate decollete zone peeking out from her pajamas was

uncommon. The duet between the exposed skin and the seemingly invisible bosom had enough offensive power to incite the desires of adolescent boys.

“Nnngh... Yuuya-kun... are you going to put a hickey there? I’m so embarrassed...”

Perhaps embarrassed, Kaede’s voice began to take on a luster. If I shifted my gaze downward, I would see the top surface of her bountiful and enchanting fruit, so I mobilized all my reasoning powers to avoid peeking, and I kissed Kaede’s décolletage.

“Ahh... Yuuya-kun... don’t lick me... it tickles.”

I kissed her with the mouth and slowly and carefully licked her collarbone area with my tongue. Kaede’s body trembled and the color resembling autumn leaves spread from her neck to this collarbone. The way she bit her fingers to keep her voice from escaping while her cheeks were dyed red are rather fascinating. The wolf inside of me, the wolf that was known as the tormentor, peeked out from the bottom of my heart.

“Mmm...! No, don’t suck on it... ah...”

In order to put a mark on Kaede’s body to prove that she was mine, I couldn’t just lick her. I could make a dental impression, but that would be painful. The only way I could do that was to suck her skin as hard as Kaede did.

“Mmm... Yuuya-kun... more...”

Kaede held my head in her hands as she called my name in her sweet, debauched voice. In response, I sucked up her collarbone as hard as I could. I pulled my mouth away just as Kaede’s mouth let out an inaudible moan of pleasure. There was now a bright red mark.

“Haa... Yuuya-kun marked me... ufufu. I’m so happy.”

Kaede’s face had a lascivious expression as she lovingly touched the red mark. I swallowed my spit as I was shocked to see her face. You can make a face like that?

“Oh... Yuya-kun’s face is bright red. Very cute... no, Yuya-kun. If you look at me like that...”

As she bent over me, Kaede let out a hot breath and whispered in my ear.

“—I’m tempted to carve more of me into you. Isn’t that good?”

“Ka, Kaede? — Tsu!?”

Chomp (TL. Or any other biting sound oof). Kaede thrust her beautiful teeth into the neck she had just put on, instead of kissing it this time.

“Yuya-kun... is mine.”

Declaring in the most bewitching tone of voice I had ever heard, Kaede bit my neck sweetly. The slightest bit of pain and the pleasure of covering it up became love and ran through my body. My breath naturally heated up as it escaped from my mouth. Oh, no. It feels so good. Without thinking, I hugged Kaede tightly.

Kaede removed her mouth and gave one last lick to the scar on my neck, which was more than enough, and her first marking time was over.

“Haafuu... Yuya-kun marked me and I marked him. Now I’ll be able to handle Rika-chan like an adult when she comes over.”

“Well...that’s good to know. It’s time to go to bed, and I think we should go to sleep.”

“Yes. It’s early in the evening, so I’m going to sleep in the afterglow of this!”

When I got into the futon, Kaede hugged me tightly. Then we kissed goodnight naturally.

“Good night, Kaede.”

“Good night, Yuya-kun.”

Tomorrow, Rika would be arriving to stay with us, so we wouldn’t be able to

sleep in each other's arms like this. It was torture to not be able to do that when I'm right next to her, but it can't be helped.

"Fufu. It was only for a little while, but Yuya-kun as a wolf, you looked really nice."

"I do it, when I have to. I'm not always getting eaten by Kaede."

"But... Yuya-kun's debauched face when he was being bitten was really cute. Please let me see that face again, okay?"

If you whispered to me in such a sweet voice, there was nothing I could do to resist. Damn it. Will there ever be a day when I can take control?

"I'm counting on you, Yuya-kun. Please be prepared when the time comes for you to eat me."

# Chapter 81 The Battle for the Lap

I'm in desperate need of help. I'm trapped to the point where I'm thinking about asking the cat robot if it has any secret tools that could help me get out of this situation. [TL: Doraemon reference.]

“Rika's place is on Yuya-onii-chan's lap! I'm not giving it to anyone!”

“No! I'm the only girl allowed to be on Yuya-kun's lap! I don't care what you say, Rika-chan, I have to ask you to step aside!”

I sighed in my mind, wondering how it happened, and tried to calm Kaede and Rika-chan, who were glaring at each other with sparks flying between them and me.

“Ka-Kaede. Rika-chan is still a child, so don't talk to her like that.”

Ever since we watched the dinosaur movie together, Kaede had been wanting to get on my lap whenever we sat on the sofa, which was cute, but to be honest, arguing with a first grader for that spot wasn't very mature. What happened to her declaration last night?

“Yes! That's my Yuya-onoi-chan! This place is my special seat!”

“Yuya-kun, would you rather have Rika-chan on your lap than me!? Could it be that Rika-chan is more important to you than me—!?”

Rika-chan sat on my lap with a big smile on her face, while Kaede-san grabbed my shoulders and stared at me with moist eyes. No, I don't think I'll be able to hold back those big tears.

“You don’t have to be so tearful... I mean, I never said I wouldn’t take Kaede on my lap. It’s Kaede I love, so don’t worry about anything weird.”

Rika was cute, sure; I liked her as a little, cute sister, but the love I have for Kaede meant I love her as a woman, so it was a different direction.

“Besides. I love Kaede more than anyone else in the world.”

I’m embarrassed, so don’t make me say it.

“Wa, I also love Yuya-kun more than anyone else.”

Kaede’s face turned red like a ripe apple and she whispered in a thin voice. She looked even more embarrassed than usual, which was so cute that I couldn’t help but pat her head. But there was a girl who raised her voice in protest.

“... Yuya-onii-chan is going to marry this woman? I thought you were going to take me as your wife?”

Rika muttered in a distant voice. Eh? Where was your cheerful voice like always? How did you end up sounding so scary, as if you were a dangerous wife? [TL: It’s supposed to be a reference, but the only thing I got was that the reference wasn’t an anime.] I mean, where the h\*\*l did you get that sound from, first grader!? I guess that’s how you could infer it was Taka-san’s beloved daughter.

“Fuffuffu. That’s right, Rika-chan. I’m the one who’s going to be Yuya-onii-chan’s bride! Because Yuya-kun is enraptured by me, body and soul!”

Kaede, who would soon be entering her second year of high school this spring, took full advantage of the situation to stir up a first grader. She turned to Rika with a smug look on her face, so proud that you could almost hear the sound effect. Yeah, it was a little too immature for me.

“No, no! I’m going to be Yuya’s-onii-chan’s wife! That’s right, right?”

“No, no! I’m Yuya-kun’s bride! Please give up, Rika-chan!”



How happy I would be if I could sigh as a bystander. This was what they commonly called a scene of carnage. I never thought that Kaede and Rika would really be in this situation. And I wasn't happy that my prediction came true.

“Yuya-kun will choose me, right!?”

“Yuya big brother is going to choose me, right!?”

I wondered why Rika was with Kaede and me in the first place. I remembered the events from this morning, with a grudge against Taka-san.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Really, I'm sorry. Yuya-kun. I'm sorry that you had to listen to Rika's selfishness.”

“I'm counting on you to take care of Rika, Yuya.”

This morning. Taka-san and Harumi-san came to my apartment with Rika-chan. As expected, I had to meet them at the entrance on the first floor since they might be late for their flight if I greeted them at my room.

“It's a sleepover at Yuya-onii-chan's house! Ehehe, let's have lots of fun, Yuya-onii-chan!”

Rika-chan entered into my embrace with a smile like a sunflower. I stroked her head, murmuring in my mind how cute she was.

Eh, what is this? I can feel an absolute zero gaze piercing my back and a chilling growl.

“I've got Rika's change of clothes and other things in here. Take care of her for three days from today, Yuya. – Hitotsuba-san.”

“Hitotsuba Kaede. I'm sorry to interrupt your lovey-dovey life with Yuya-kun, but please take care of my daughter, okay?”

When Harumi-san bowed politely, Kaede, who was standing behind me,

looked flustered and said, ‘It’s my pleasure,’ and returned the bow.

“Okay, Rika. Like I said at home, you can’t bother Yuya-kun and Kaede-san, okay? And of course, you can’t be selfish, okay?”

“I know! I’m being a good girl and listening to Yuya-onii-chan!”

Rika declared as she squeezed my waist, but Harumi looked very worried. Taka was almost crying, as if he was sad to be separated from her. If that was the case, why don’t you take Rika with you?

“Hmm... I’m still worried about you. Hitotsuba-san. If Rika misbehaves, please scold her. This girl has no boundaries when it comes to Yuya-kun.”

“It’s okay. Even if Rika-chan is cute, I have faith in Yuya-kun!”

That was strange. I think Kaede’s response to Harumi’s comment was exquisitely off. But Rika’s gaze sharpened when she heard it. And before you knew it, the two of them were staring at each other.

“Ah... Yuya. I know it’s a lot to take in, but I’m counting on you.”

“Uh-huh. Take care of yourself, Taka-san and Harumi-san. Have fun on your trip.”

This was how I saw them off and came back to the room with Rika about an hour ago. After that, I checked the contents of Rika’s bag, then took a break and sat down on the couch, and the fight for my lap started.

\* \* \* \* \*

That was the end of my recollection.

“Come on, Yuya-kun. Me or Rika-chan. Have you decided which one you want to put on your lap!”

“Of course it’s me, right? Please tell me it is, Yuya-onii-chan!”

The two of them approached each other with fierce looks on their faces. I

mean, Kaede. You're burning with hostility towards a first-grade girl, aren't you? Did you forget your declaration to Harumi-san?

"Ah... here's the thing. Why don't we decide with that? It's this game that Rika-chan brought."

That's right. Rika had brought the blow-up game that I had beaten up Takasan with from home. She said she wanted to play with me with that game.

"I see. So the winner of this matchup will get the right to sit on Yuya-kun's lap. It's easy to understand, right?"

"Fuffufuffu. I've got this game!"

Rika-chan uttered the famous words of a certain high school detective in the west. It makes me want to ask her what kind of educational policy she received.

"I won't go easy on you, you know. Please be prepared for that, Rika-chan!"

"Kaede-onee-chan, you're the one who shouldn't cry when you see how serious I am!"

Hey, don't they seem to be getting along?

## Chapter 82 Don\_t be so immature

The battle between Kaede and Rika-chan was about to begin. The rules were quite simple. The first player to defeat the opponent three times would win the game. Yes, it was truly simple and easy to understand.

“Fufu. I’ll show you what I’m capable of!” [TL: Skipped a reference.]

“Hmph! Don’t think you can beat me since I practiced my combos against my dad!”

Both of them chose characters that emphasized speed. Their fighting style was to move at high speed and evade while taking advantage of gaps to deliver blows. Will it be Kaede or Rika-chan who will win this dizzying battle of offense and defense? It was a battle to look forward to.

A few minutes after the start of the matchup.

“Kuh! You dodge well! So that’s the younger generation...! I can’t believe my technique didn’t work!”

“Kaede-onee-chan, you’re the one who really has a blank! Ugh...I can’t beat it!”

I don’t know. It started out as a stupid bet for my lap, but it was getting really heated, and they even seemed to recognize each other as rivals. I like it. I was tempted to do the same. I’ll have to get my controller ready.

“Alright...here we go—! Yes! Yuya-kun! We won!”

“Aaaaahhhh—!”

Kaede raised her hands in the air and hugged me with a roar of victory, while Rika-chan fell off the sofa in unexpected defeat. Seeing Rika-chan's reaction really made me worry about her future. Was she going to be a comedian?

“Hehehehe. Now Yuya-kun's lap is mine. Hey, Yuya-kun. Please give me a hug from behind like you always do. This is a reward for the winner of the fierce battle!”

“It's not fair, Kaede-once-chan! You don't just want his lap, you also want a hug from him!”

Kaede proudly prompted me for a hug, saying that this was the privilege of a winner. Yeah, this was definitely not mature. Why don't you give Rika-chan a chance to get her revenge?

“Eh, what's that? I'm glad you're hugging me, but why are we back at the character selection screen? Hey, isn't the character a super heavyweight? And I'm the one who's going to operate it? I've never used this girl before!”

“Come on, Rika-chan. This is a revenge match. If you win this one, the lap is yours!”

“—! Okay, okay! I'll do my best!”

‘You're evil!’, shouted Kaede. Rika's face was even more serious than in the first round. It was as if she was betting her life on this fight. On the other hand, Kaede's movements were lackluster, probably due to the fact that I was holding her. Well, that was partly because I chose to use an unfamiliar power-type character.

“Shh, I have to be serious... but I can't get any strength from Yuya-kun's hug...”

Her face was debauched and she was unable to concentrate. Even so, she struggled to get back on her feet, but I tried to sabotage her by keeping her in my hug. Each time I did, Kaede's body relaxed, exposing an opening. 120%. There was no way she could compete with Rika, who was 120% serious. The second game ended with a complete victory for Rika.

“Yaaaah—! Come on, Kaede-onee-chan! Please get out of the way! Big brother Yuya’s lap is mine!”

“Ugh... Yuya-kun, it’s not fair. You knew I was nervous, so you squeezed me while we played! And you even blew on my ear at the decisive moments! This match is null and void! I demand a third round!”

Kaede was right; when she was starting to be able to concentrate on the hug, I blew some breath into her ear. If that didn’t work, I was going to give her a sweet bite on her earlobe, but I didn’t have to, the game was already lost.

“Hehehe. If you wish so. But first, please get off his lap! Ehehe. It’s a game for Yuya-onii-chan’s lap!”

Rika happily climbed on my lap and frolicked. Oh, she was so cute, just like a little sister. I couldn’t help but want to pat her head. Of course, Kaede’s cheeks would puff up like a blowfish and she would get teary-eyed if I did that. But even that sulky face was cute, so Kaede was pretty much a foul play.

“Hey, let’s do it together this time, Yuya-onii-chan!”

Rika invited me to join her, so I connected the game controller that I had been secretly preparing. Now we can all play together!

“I’m going to win this matchup and take back my place on Yuya-kun’s lap! I’m not going to go easy on you!”

“Hmph! I think I’ll change my character this time. But I’m not going to give you Yuya-onii-chan’s lap, you know!”

Oh, come on. Are you two even planning on beating me? As I clicked my stick around, I selected my familiar swordsman character and smiled wryly.

“If I win... you two have to get along, okay?”

We fought about ten more times. I never lost a single battle and succeeded in making Kaede and Rika-chan get along.

# Chapter 83 The Movie Rika-chan Wants to See

By the time Kaede and Rika-chan had successfully gotten to know each other, it was just around the time to eat lunch. The three of us were playing the game like crazy. I smiled as Kaede and Rika-chan climbed in and out of my lap after each game.

“Yuya-kun was the least mature... he’s too unforgiving.”

“I knew you were strong since you beat up my dad, but I didn’t think you were this strong. You should take it a little easy on me, Yuya-onii-chan.”

“Wouldn’t it be boring if I went easy on you? Besides, you attacked me two on one in the middle of the game, so wouldn’t that be more unfair?”

They felt that I was too strong for them to challenge me to a proper fight, so they came to fight against me to defeat me. If I didn’t respond to their determination to win at all costs, I’d be a foolish man.

“By the way, Yuya-onii-chan’s spaghetti is as delicious as ever! I could eat this every day!”

Rika sucked the noodles into her mouth, making a nice slurping sound. Lunch was spaghetti with meat sauce that I had made last night for this occasion. I had used it as a base for lasagna for Shinji and Otsuki-san, but I liked it best when simply tossed with pasta.

“Yuya-kun, you said that Spaghetti with meat sauce is Rika-chan’s favorite food, so I wanted her to eat it. I’m so jealous though.”

‘I know I’m the one saying that, but I hope Rika-chan will be pleased with what inspired me to make it!’ That was what Kaede said, though. As for me, I wanted to make some dumplings that we could make together, but I guess we could save that for the night.

“Hey, what do you want to do after this? Do you want to play another game? This time, let’s play Kaede and Rika-chan’s team versus Yuya-onii-chan!”

“Fufu. An irregular team battle, huh? I might be able to beat up Yuya-kun without worrying about fighting each other in this!”

“And so! How about we say that if we win, Yuya-onii-chan will do one thing we ask for! I want to take a bath together!”

Hey! Kaede, Rika; all these girls around me, why do they always want to take a bath with me!? Isn’t it strange!?

“That’s odd, Rika-chan. I’ve always wanted to take a bath with Yuya-kun, too. Then the three of us can go in together! It’s fine. Our bath is big enough for the three of us!”

Kaede, not you too! I couldn’t lose this one, no matter what! That was what I would say, but we had already made our plans for after this, Kaede.

“We’ll play the game again tonight, but after this I think we should go out for a bit. Rika-chan, I thought there was a movie you wanted to watch?”

“U-un. I usually go with my uncle to see the movies... probably?”

“Probably? Well, do you want to go see the show now? Actually, I’ve already booked the tickets, you know?”

Rika-chan’s face bloomed into a full flower. Kaede and I exchanged glances and smiled at the sight. I’m glad I booked the tickets online.

“Well then, let’s go to the cinema as soon as we finish eating! Actually, I’ve been wanting to see it too, Kamen Raider!”

The movie Rika-chan wanted to see was a movie with a lot of special effects.



An annual double feature film with squadron heroes. I thought that a first grade girl would be interested in something like Pu?kyu? [TL: Another reference I don't get...], but I guess Taka-san's influence affected her. His room was decorated with belts and figures from those movies.

“Thank you, Yuya-onii-chan and Kaede-onnee-chan!”

“I think I'm starting to understand why Taka-san is such a parental fool...”

It was no wonder he loved her so much when she showed him this cute smile. It was no wonder he became such a foolish parent.

“Hey, Yuya-kun. How about my smile? Is this Kaede turning you into a fool too?”

Kaede put her index fingers on both cheeks, smiled and asked something out of the blue. Rika-chan also froze in surprise.

“... Uu. Answer me, please! What do you think, Yuya-kun!? Are you becoming a Kaede-loving fool when seeing my smile!?”

I'm getting more and more confused about what you were saying, but could it be that? Was it because I said that I could understand why Rika would be a foolish parent when she smiled at me? Were you asking me if I'm being silly by smiling in response to that, Kaede? No, that was just silly, wasn't it? But I would answer you, was it the world's mercy?

“Don't worry, Kaede. Because I'm already a Kaede-loving idiot.”

I kissed her on her puffy cheek. If it weren't for Rika-chan, I would have kissed her lips, but it was not good for her education. Even if Taka-san and Harumi-san were kissing intimately, we couldn't follow suit.

“Ehehe. I love you too, Yuya-kun, you idiot!”

But she didn't care about my consideration. Kaede wrapped her hands around my neck and hugged me. Hey, hey, hey! Rika-chan's right in front of us, so calm down.

“Ugh... I’m not going to lose either! I’m gonna grow big!”

Rika-chan’s eyes glazed over as she gobbled up the rest of the spaghetti on her plate in one gulp. By the way, Rika-chan. What did you see in Kaede that made you say you wanted to grow up?

“That’s what Dad said! If I look like my mom, I’ll definitely have bigger b\*\*\*s in the future, so I can make Yuya-onii-chan fall in love with me!”

Very well. Then it was war, Taka-san.

## Chapter 84 Which word will you believe, Rika-chan

Normally we would take the train, but today Rika-chan was with us, so we asked Miyamoto-san to give us a ride. He came as soon as Kaede called, which was surprisingly fast. Where on earth does he usually go and what does he do?

“I can’t answer that because... that would violate the terms of my work contract.”

‘Miyamoto-san came from the future.’ No, he didn’t! Kaede was giggling, so I was sure that she made up the story. I sighed, slightly dumbfounded, and called out to Rika-chan, who was sitting quietly next to me like a baby doll.

“What’s wrong, Rika-chan? Are you sick?”

Just before we left, Rika-chan was excitedly talking about the appeal of the masked heroes that were currently on air. I was only vaguely familiar with the first Kamen rider, but according to Rika, it was pretty interesting. She said that the second warrior in particular was very cool.

Rika was making a passionate speech like that, but as soon as she got in the car, she became quiet like a different person. She didn’t get carsick or anything, did she?

“N-no, Yuya-onii-chan. I’m just nervous because I’ve never ridden in such a beautiful car before.”

That was surprising. A child of Rika’s age would not be nervous, but rather

excited. I was also confused when I was put in this luxury car without knowing why.

“Fufu. Come to think of it, Yuya-kun at that time was also shaking like a stray cat at first, right? But it’s okay, Rika-chan.”

Kaede smiled and gently hugged Rika and patted her head. The sight made her look as precious as a holy mother.

“Even back then, when I patted Yuya-kun who was nervous like this, he calmed down. So Rika-chan, with this—”

“Can you please stop fabricating memories so easily!? If anything, Kaede-san was just laughing at my nervousness, right!?”

I take back what I said before. She looked like a holy mother, but that was not what she was. The real Kaede was still the same, teasing Kaede. Don’t lie to Rika-chan!

“I wasn’t laughing back then, okay? Rika-chan, Yuya-kun is trying to tease me.”

“I’m not teasing you, you know!? You were giggling and watching me shake! Don’t you dare say that was a lie!”

Back then, suddenly, I was being driven into a luxury foreign car for the first time in my life since I was born. If there was anyone who didn’t shudder at that, they must have had a very strong mentality. Unfortunately, I didn’t possess such thick nerves.

“Hey, Rika-chan. Which would you believe, Rika-chan, if it’s me or Yuya-kun’s words? It’s me, of course, right?”

Kaede continued to nudge Rika-chan with a smile like a holy mother. Yes, they looked like two beautiful sisters who get along well. Rika-chan would definitely be popular in the future.

“Mmmm... K-Kaede-onee-chan, I guess?”

“You’re lying, Rika-chan! You’re actually believing Kaede’s words over mine!”

“That’s my Rika-chan! I’m a little concerned about the slightly questioning answer, but I still give you a perfect score for calling me Onee-chan! That’s right! I’ll buy you whatever goods you want in return!”

Kaede was rubbing her cheeks against Rika-chan’s, but she didn’t show any sign of displeasure. I know, I know. Kaede’s cheeks had a magical power. Just touching her cheeks was soothing.

“What is it, Yuya-kun? You look envious, but maybe you want me to rub your cheeks?”

“Ah... Yuya-onii-chan... Kaede-onee-chan’s cheeks are just the kind of cheeks that ruin people’s lives.... she’s so different from Dad.”

In the blink of an eye, Rika-chan made a lewd face. Also, it was a pity that Kaede was compared to her father, Taka-san. I’m sure Taka’s cheeks were all scratched up from his beard, so it would only hurt if he used them.

“Fufu, I can’t help it. Rika-chan is my first priority right now. I’ll give Yuya-kun some time in the night, please be patient.”

“I-I don’t envy her at all! A cheek to cheek is fine, but if we can kiss like we always do at night, that’s all that matters!”

“M-mou, Yuya-kun! Rika-chan is here, so please control yourself! You had already decided to hold back while Rika-chan was staying with us!”

My true feelings inadvertently came out of my mouth. I did promise Kaede that I wouldn’t kiss or lick her ears in front of her and Rika-chan! In order to be patient, I put on a hickey last night and completely forgot about it.

“B-but. If you insist, I’ll give you a kiss, okay? After Rika-chan goes to bed, of course. As always, a thick chuu... right?”

“...Kaede-onee-chan, isn’t it strange to say that, now that I’m here?”

Rika was absolutely right.

“That’s what they call meotoppuru, isn’t it?”

The driver, Miyamoto-san, opened his mouth for the first time here. And how do you know the word ‘meotoppuru’!?

“That’s not important. More importantly, we’re about to arrive. There’s not much time to buy drinks and such, so please hurry.”

The fun and enjoyable drive was over, and instead it was time for the much-awaited movie.

“We’ll have to wait until after the show to buy the merchandise, but we certainly won’t have enough time to buy drinks or anything else. Yuya-kun, Rika-chan. Is there anything you want to eat?”

Kaede asked me while looking at the watch I gave her. Rika and I made eye contact and gave a small nod, breathing together and answering the question at the same time.

“”Coke and popcorn! With salt!””

I can’t start a movie without one!

# Chapter 85 The Fatal Draw

While Kaede was issuing the tickets, Rika and I decided to line up at the concession stand. It was indeed a movie theater on a spring break weekend. The theater was crowded with couples and families, and according to Kaede, the movie we were about to see was fully booked. It was a miracle that we could sit in a row of three.

“Kaede-onee-chan asked for Calpis, right? [TL: A fruity softdrink.] Are you sure you don’t want any popcorn?”

“I’ll ask for a size M and we can eat it together. Rika-chan, make it a size S and you can eat it alone.”

Even after watching the movie, we still had plenty of time before dinner, so it would be okay if we got hungry here. But instead of being pleased, Rika raised her eyebrows and started thinking. What was there to be confused about?

“Yuya-onii-chan. I don’t want popcorn either.”

“Eh? Rika-chan, didn’t you want them?”

“Instead, let’s make the size that Yuya-onii-chan asks for the biggest, largest size and share it with the three of us!”

Rika was right, it would be more financially efficient to buy one large item rather than one for each person. It was amazing that a first grader could think this far ahead. Well, that was the result of Harumi-san’s education. It was not Taka-san’s achievement.

“I’m definitely going to monopolize the space next to Yuya-onii-chan for the sake of sharing popcorn. I’m not going to let you have that...!”

E-eh? Aren’t Rika-chan’s remarks quite scary? Didn’t she and Kaede get to know each other in the morning game? Didn’t they get along like sisters in the car?

“That wasn’t not the same as this now, Yuya-onii-chan. This is... jup! It’s an epic battle! That’s a battle that I can’t lose!”

I see. The fight for the seat next to me was on the same level as the big battle of Samurai Blue. It was an honor to think about it, but a high school student versus an elementary school student was a terrible matchup. If I had to make an analogy, I would say yes, it was like playing against Belgium, the number one ranked football team in the world. The other party just had no chance.

“Welcome! Have you placed your order yet?”

In the first place, would the kind of fight that Rika was concerned about really happen? Kaede wouldn’t do something like that.

“Oh, yes. Two Cokes of size M and one size M of Calpis. I’ll have one large size of popcorn salt, please.”

Thinking absentmindedly, I told her my order. The waitress entered the order into the cash register with a familiar hand. There was no hesitation in her movements, and she must have memorized the panel layout.

“You’ve ordered two M sizes of Coke and one M size of Calpis. And one large size of salty popcorn, right? That will be 1510 yen!” [TN: ~11€ || ~13\$.]

Before paying the bill, the clerk recited to make sure I was right while looking at the screen. I nodded and took out exactly the right amount of cash from my wallet to pay.

Kaede had given me a black card made of a material so durable, it was hard to believe it was a credit card, but I’m too scared to use it. It was not a card that a high school student should possess, even if it was using her parents’



name.

“Here you go, sir! Here are the items for you!”

“Thank you. Rika-chan, I’m sorry, but can you accept one Coke, please?”

“Okay!”

The number of drinks I could insert into the tray was limited to two, and I couldn’t hold the tray in one hand because of the popcorn, so I asked Rika to help me. The waitress gently handed me the drink as she leaned over the counter. I appreciated this kind of attention to detail.

“Hold it carefully so you don’t drop it, Rika-chan.”

“I’m fine with this! You’re treating me like a child too much!”

“That’s right, Yuya-kun. There’s nothing wrong with worrying, but worrying too much is not good for you, you know?”

When I got out of the crowd at the concession stand, I was able to meet up with Kaede, who had exchanged her ticket. Rika’s gaze sharpened when she saw the three sheets of paper in my hand, and Kaede noticed it and smiled wryly. Was the battle really going to start?

“That look in your eyes. And Yuya, you’re holding only one large piece of popcorn. Fufu. Rika, you noticed that, didn’t you?”

“Of course, Kaede-onee-chan. I’m sure onee-chan would try to push me to the edge by sitting between me and Yuya-onii-chan to share the popcorn. I’m not going to let that happen!”

Hey, hey. Seriously, Kaede? Did you really think of that? What kind of smirk is that, like that of a rival character who recognizes the hero as the strong one! You’re too immature for that!

“So, how are you going to decide where to sit, Kaede-onee-chan? Is it rock-paper-scissors?”

“Fufu. It’s simpler than that. Here’s your ticket, Yuya-kun.”

Kaede put my ticket on the tray with the seat number written on the side down so that I couldn’t see it.

“Come on, Rika-chan. Please choose one of these two cards. If you can draw the winning ticket, the seat next to Yuya-onii-chan will be Rika-chan’s. But if you’re wrong... well, you’ll have to be prepared to choose!”

What is this farce? What am I being shown? I want to let out a sigh of dismay that my cute girlfriend was playing a mysterious game against a first grader, but I couldn’t comment on anything because the expression on Rika’s face was so serious.

“Fufu, this is an important draw that will determine your fate. You must draw it mindfully.”

“...Draw. Draw the right one. The one sitting next to Yuya-onii-chan... will be me! I’m coming, Kaede-onee-chan. Draw!”

Rika’s screams echoed through the entrance of the theater. What card did she draw—!?

“No, Kaede, but isn’t Rika-chan too lively?”

I’m not sure if this was Yu-Gi-Oh or not, but no one could tell which card she received.

# Chapter 86 I want to make out with you while watching a movie

The inside of the theater gradually darkened and the previews began to play. Rika-chan, who was sitting right next to me, was throwing popcorn into her mouth and pouring it down with Coke and a twinkle in her eyes. If she was drinking and eating at such a fast pace, wouldn't she be full by the middle of the movie, or would she need to go to the bathroom?

"Don't worry. If I have to go to the bathroom, I'll hold it."

"No, that's not what I'm talking about. You have to be careful, okay? If you leave in the middle of the day, you'll annoy the other customers."

"It can't be helped, Yuya-kun. If you eat popcorn, you'll want to drink juice. Rika-chan, if you need to go to the bathroom, please don't hold back and tell me, okay?"

Kaede, who was sitting to my left, told Rika in a quiet voice, and Rika nodded her head.

Kaede suggested a seat next to me, and we fought over who would sit next to me. The result of the draw that would decide Rika-chan's fate. She pulled up a card next to me with flying colors. Unfortunately, this seemed to be a planned event, and when I checked my seat number, I was right in the middle of the two of them. From the beginning, both Kaede and Rika were supposed to be next to me. Well, of course.

"Fufu. This is the first time I've seen a special effects hero movie in a theater.

I'm kind of excited."

"Actually, it's my first time, too. I'm kind of looking forward to it."

"Both of you. It's about to start, so be quiet! No talking during the screening, okay?"

I was talking to Kaede, and Rika-chan got mad at me. I apologized, and then I fixed my gaze on the theater.

After the "Illegal Uploading is a Crime" video ended, the lights went down completely and it was pitch black. The film began with a powerful battle scene as soon as it opened with the familiar opening of the zabang and the waves on the cliffs.

Incidentally, this was a gorgeous double reveal of a Kamen hero and a masked hero, starting with the Kamen hero.

When I was looking at her, Kaede squeezed my hand. This surprise caught me off guard, but I didn't say anything and intertwined my fingers to grip back. Then I glanced at Kaede and our eyes met perfectly. Even in the dark, I could clearly see Kaede's soft smile. I can't believe she was the same age as me; she looked so mature.

"I've always wanted to try it once. Watching a movie in a movie theater while holding hands with someone I love."

"How do you feel now since you tried it the first time?"

"Fufu. It's very nice, isn't it? I feel a different kind of excitement."

As she said this, Kaede snuggled into my shoulder. And the lover's bond evolved into a daring fold of arms. Oh, how soft it feels.

"If it weren't for Rika-chan I could have kissed you. I guess we'll have to leave that for next time."

"That's true; it's a tempting proposition, but I don't think it's a good idea, Kaede."

Kissing in a public place was indeed a bad idea! I mean, it was a great thing to do in a private space, but not in public! Well, you only had to kiss once in front of everyone.

“So that means... at the wedding, right? Fufu. Yuya-kun, you’re being too hasty. Where do you want to hold the ceremony? Is the honeymoon still overseas?”

You’re jumping to conclusions, Kaede! But if possible, I’d like to have a small-sized wedding. But considering Kaede’s parents’ house, I don’t think that would be possible. For the honeymoon, I’d like to go to a resort where we can spend a quiet time. But...

“But I’m happy and have fun wherever I go with you, Yuya-kun.”

“...That’s what I was just going to say.”

“Huh. Then I guess we’re like kindred spirits.”

I’m just glad we were thinking the same thing. I wanted to kiss Kaede right now, before the roots of my tongue dry up.

“I can’t kiss you, so instead I’m going to... right. Let’s do it when we stick together.”

Kaede smiled debaucherously and hugged my arms even tighter. I couldn’t resist how cute she was, so I patted her head. It was not like I was immersed in this movie. In addition, Rika would get mad at me for whispering.

“\_\_\_\_\_”

Rika’s eyes were wide open and she was watching the movie with a look of concentration. So this was how a child concentrated.

“I don’t want to disturb her, so why don’t we be quiet too?”

“Yeah, let’s do that.”

But sadly. After the movie was over, Rika-chan got rather angry with me and

Kaede.

## Chapter 87 Rika gets angry

“Yuya-onii-chan, Kaede-onee-chan. Is there anything you want to say?”

“No, nothing.”

“Me too. I have nothing.”

As soon as the movie ended and we left the theater, Rika folded her arms and glared at Kaede and me with a sharp, angry look in her eyes. There was no way to argue with her. I had gotten a little carried away.

“I understand. Yes, I understand. My mom and dad hold hands at the movie theater, too, you know. But! They didn’t go so far as to put their arms around each other and put their heads on each other’s shoulders!”

What was this feeling? Was this the kind of sarcasm I had heard about from my mother-in-law? The way Rika stomped on the ground in frustration made me smile, even though she was angry, and it was kind of cute, so it made my cheeks relax too.

“Ah! What are you laughing at, Yuya-onii-chan! I’m angry, you know! Do you understand that!?”

“Ahahaha. I know, Rika-chan.”

I can’t. Rika is so cute, I can’t look directly at her.

“Muuu—! You definitely don’t understand! Kaede-onee-chan is sorry for what she did, right!?”

“It can’t be helped, can it? Because I wanted to cling to Yuya-kun.”

Kaede, why were you talking like you were going to put more oil into the fire! And with the added bonus of folding your arms around me! See, the light was gone from Rika’s eyes. Her shoulders were also shaking at full-force.

“Ri, Rika-chan?”

“Uu... uu... ujaaaaaa!”

Rika-chan suddenly went crazy and broke down. And then, with a thump and a frustrated grunt, she glared at me and tackled me in the waist.

“I’ll stick to Yuya-onii-chan too! I won’t let Kaede-once-chan feel good only!”

I was caught off guard when, in a complete surprise, Rika’s head was thrust hard onto my stomach. I was in pain and struggling to breathe, but she held me tightly as if squeezing my waist, which made it even more and more harder to breathe.

“Ri, Rika-chan. Yuya-kun looks like he’s in pain, so please step away from him.”

“I don’t like it! Kaede-once-chan is going to monopolize him after saying that, aren’t you!? I won’t be fooled!”

Kaede, why do you keep your mouth shut there? That was where you admonish Rika-chan to stay away from me because you won’t do that, right? Why were you looking away from me there? You know what to do, right? Right!?

“A-argh... Rika-chan. I understand how you feel, but you need to let go of me first. Because I can’t breathe for goodness sake. Please.”

“... No. I don’t want to leave.”

I stroked Rika-chan’s head and asked her to do it, but she just shook her head



sideways while pressing her face against me. It was the same as Kaede's spoiled child state. This was a problem.

"If you leave me, Yuya-onii-chan, you won't be able to hold hands with me. You've been holding hands with Kaede-onee-chan for a long time, haven't you? I want to hold hands with you too."

I see. So Kaede was the cause of all this. I can't deny that I wanted to hold hands with Kaede, but let's be mature about this. Isn't that right, Kaede?

"That's right. Rika-chan also wants to hold hands with Yuya-kun, doesn't she? So I have a proposal for such a Rika-chan."

"...Whatt?"

When Rika showed interest, Kaede folded her knees, brought her face close to hers, and whispered in her ear. Rika nodded her head and a smile bloomed on her face. It was like the sky, which had been dark and rainy, bursted into a rainbow.

"Yuya-onii-chan. I'm sorry for being so selfish."

Rika backed away from me and bowed her head. No, I'm not mad at you, so there was nothing to apologize for, okay? Come on, let's hold hands, okay?

"Ehehe. Thanks, Yuya-onii-chan!"

With a big smile on her face, Rika stepped in between me and Kaede. I wondered if Kaede would go into spoiled child mode if she did that. But my fears were unfounded. Kaede naturally took Rika's free hand in hers.

"I held hands between my mom and dad like this when I was a kid, so I thought it would be nice to do something like this. It's another great way to prepare for the future."

When I saw Kaede, I had a vivid vision of our future selves walking around with a child. The child was a girl, just like Kaede. Kaede as a mother looked very happy while our excited daughter was playing with her, and I was smiling at her.

“Fufu. I’m looking forward to that day, Yuya-kun.”

“I’ll have to work hard for that to happen. A lot of things.”

“Both of you! Don’t make a strawberry space with me in between you!”

I really wish I could have a happy future like this, I thought. [TL: Oh man, if this novel was an action-drama one, you would have raised a death flag.]

## Chapter 88 Suddenly Missing

We had come to see a movie at a shopping mall complex. In addition to the movie theater, there were various stores, so you could spend a whole day there and never get bored. It wasn't bad to wander around, but the two girls wanted to eat crepes, so we moved to the food court.

“Well. I'll get you some crepes, what would you like to eat?”

“Yes, yes! A custard crème chocolate banana then!”

“I'll have custard strawberry & mixed berry whipped cream, please.”

Rika-chan wanted the standard chocolate banana and Kaede-san the strawberry. It was as if the girls could come up with the names so easily. I only memorized the chocolate banana combo.

“I'll go get some then, and you two can wait here quietly. If you fight, I'll confiscate your crepes, okay?”

“Eeh!?” I left the two of them protesting and headed for the store. It was indeed the weekend of spring break. There was quite a line. And most of them were women or couples. I felt embarrassed because I was the only man there alone. I had to endure the embarrassment for less than a minute. Finally, I was able to order. After a few more minutes of waiting, I received two crepes and was on my way back to my seat when my phone, which was tucked in my pants pocket, vibrated. I wondered who it was. As much as I wanted to leave, I couldn't do it right away because my hands were full. First, I have to get back to Kaede and the others.

“Ah! Yuya-kun! You're finally back!”

“Kaede? What’s wrong? Hey, where’s Rika-chan? She’s not with you?”

“That’s right! I came back from the bathroom and she was nowhere to be found... what should I do!?”

Kaede’s face was pale and she looked like she was about to cry. I couldn’t understand what was happening right away, but I made her sit down first to calm her down as she was more panicked than I was.

“Where did she go... we have to go find her now... if anything happens to her, we’ll be in trouble!”

“Calm down, Kaede. I know you’re panicking, but you need to stay cool. Here, take a bite of a crepe and calm down, okay?”

“Ah... what should I do? I left her alone because I thought she’d be fine since she was so well-behaved... but Rika-chan is so cute, you don’t think someone took her away? If anything happens to Rika-chan, I...”

“—Calm down, Kaede!”

I couldn’t help but call out her name in a strong tone. Kaede’s shoulders trembled as I thrust the crepe into her mouth and fed it to her. I wondered if she had cooled down a bit by munching on the cream along with the batter.

“Don’t worry. I’m sure she just couldn’t wait to get here and wandered off somewhere to play. We’ll find her soon.”

“Ugh... I hope so...”

Kaede looked depressed even as she munched on her crepe. I was also panicking in my mind. In a situation like this, the best thing to do was to go to the general information counter and ask them to announce that she was lost. That said, if we both left here at the same time, there was a possibility that Rika-chan and we would get separated. So it would be better for Kaede to stay behind and for me to go.

“Okay, Kaede, you stay here. I’ll go to the general information counter to have the lost child announcement played. In the meantime, if Rika-chan

comes back, call me. Okay?”

“Yes, I understand...”

After patting Kaede’s downcast head, I was about to walk away when someone called out to me fearfully.

“U-um, excuse me. I can probably tell you where the elementary school-aged girl who was sitting there went.”

The person who approached us was a mother with a girl about the same age as Rika-chan. That person seemed to know the information we wanted to know the most right now. Clinging to a newfound hope, Kaede jumped up and asked.

“Y-you’ve seen Rika-chan!? Where!? Where did you see her!?”

The mother and the child froze in shock. Because your agitation might prevent her from listening, I gently hugged Kaede’s shoulder.

“Kaede, calm down. I’m sorry, we didn’t mean to startle you. So, where did the girl who was here go?”

“Y-yes. That’s the girl, but I’m sure she’s headed towards the movie theater.”

Movie theater? We were here just a minute ago. Why?

“You know what! Before onii-chan and onee-chan came back, a Pikachu passed by here! I saw her follow it!”

The electric mouse from the nation’s most popular cartoon has shown up here? Eh? I’m getting more and more confused. What do you mean?

“They’re having a photo shoot event to promote a movie that’s coming out in the summer. They were parading around announcing it, and I think she happened to see it and followed it.”

So that was how it went. If I was bored waiting by myself and saw a stuffed animal walking by, I would want to follow it. Furthermore, the mother told

me that the photo shooting event was still going on.

I thanked her politely and Kaede and I hurried to the cinema, taking a chance that Rika-chan might still be there. I really wanted Kaede to stay behind, but she stubbornly refused to listen.

“I don’t want to! I’m coming with you! I don’t want to be left alone to wait!”

“...Okay. Then we’ll go together.”

There was no time for pushing and shoving, so we decided to go together. Please be there, Rika-chan!

# Chapter 89 The Lost Kitten

Normally, I wouldn't be out of breath in a short dash like this, but my breathing was erratic due to my impatience as I ran frantically, bobbing my shoulders up and down.

“Rika-chan...! Rika-chan...!”

Kaede, who was running alongside me, muttered her name as if in prayer. The fact that she was normally not running as fast as I could, but could still keep up, showed how worried she was about Rika-chan. You wouldn't believe the power that people possessed when they were cornered.

“Please, please, please stay safe...!”

Kaede accelerated her run, with the movie theater in front of her. In the event space set up in the lobby in front of the theater, a handshake session and photo session with a stuffed yellow mouse, a very popular character, was still going on. [TL: The pikachu.]

“Haa...haa... Rika-chan, where are you...!”

Kaede and I looked around the area. The waiting line for the event was only for parents and children, not children only. If that was the case, I widened my field of vision to see if she was watching from a distance, but she wasn't.

Wasn't she here after all? Just when I started to fear that...

“Is there any companion of Rika Omichi-channnn—?”

“...Eh? Rika-chan!?”

I saw the female staff of the movie theater shouting at the top of their lungs

as she pulled Rika-chan's hand. Kaede reacted faster than I did and started running. I hurriedly followed her.

“— Ah! It's Kaede-onee-chan!”

“—Rika-chan!”

Rika left the staff and ran to Kaede with a smile. Kaede hugged the innocent-looking girl tightly, unaware of the worries of others. Forgetting that she was holding a crepe in one hand, she hugged her tightly. In surprise at her sudden action, the staff member shouted, ‘Ah!’

“Hey, hey, Kaede-onee-chan! Let's get our picture taken with that Pikachu over there! He's only coming today! Huh? What's wrong, Kaede-onee-chan? Are you crying?”

Rika pointed to a stuffed animal on a simple stage happily taking pictures with children, not caring about her situation. However, her expression turned suspicious when she noticed that Kaede, who was hugging her, was crying.

“You were already... gone on your own... and I was so worried! I was wondering if something happened to Rika-chan...”

Kaede spilled tears. Rika-chan was confused as to why Kaede-san was crying, and turned her gaze to me as if asking for help.

“I was also really worried when Rika-chan disappeared, okay? Why couldn't you have waited until I or Kaede came back?”

“B-because... when I thought that I might not see the Pikachu again, my body started to move...”

“I see. I get it. But you know, Rika-chan. Kaede and I were really worried that we wouldn't be able to see you again after you suddenly disappeared. So from now on, don't disappear without permission, okay?”

It was no use yelling at her. Rika was still a child compared to us. Her curiosity might get the better of her at times. That was why I told her gently. I tried to make her understand that if she did something like this, the people



loving her would be sad.

“I’m sorry... for disappearing without permission... I’m sorry, Kaede-onee-chan, Yuya-onii-chan...”

“...It’s fine. We were able to see Rika-chan again like this. If we keep hugging forever, the event will be over. We can get a picture, so let’s have it taken!”

“Yeah! Let’s go quickly, Kaede-onee-chan!”

The two of them looked very close, like a real parent and child, and held hands as they trotted off to the event booth. I bowed politely to the cinema staff who had protected Rika-chan and followed her with a wry smile on my face. Then I realized one important thing.

“Look, look, Yuya-kun! Hurry up! We’re the last of us!”

“Yuya-onii-chan, hurry up!”

Let’s first move to the two people who beckoned me to hurry. But I don’t know if you had noticed, Rika-chan.

I handed my phone to the staff member in charge of taking pictures and went up to the stage. With Rika-chan in the center, Kaede and I bent down to get in front of the stuffed animals.

“Is the camera for your brother? Yes? I’ll take a picture then, right? Oh, please get closer! That’s right! Okay, here we go. Yes, cheese.”

A crisp sound was heard and the photo shoot was successfully completed. At the end, Rika shook hands with the national electric mouse and exchanged high-fives.

“Yuya-kun, please send that picture you just took to my phone, okay? Okay?”

“Ah! I want a picture too! But I don’t have a phone... what should I do?”

“Rika, don’t worry. We can develop the film at a photo shop now. Let’s go together soon.”

Rika nodded with a smile, ‘Yes’. Looking at these two, they looked like a real parent and child. If Kaede and I had a child, she would definitely make a good mother. And we would be able to create a happy family.

“Oh, both of you. If you want to develop the film, I’ll go ahead and do it now, and you’d better go buy some clothes.”

“Eh? Clothes? Why?”

An illusory question mark could be seen above Kaede’s head. But Rika-chan, the person concerned, seemed to have noticed.

“It’s for Rika-chan. Didn’t you notice? There’s crepe whipped cream all over her back.”

When she was hugged, Rika’s back was covered with the uneaten crepe that Kaede had been holding. It wasn’t a noticeable amount, but it was definitely stained.

“A-ah...? I’m sorry, Rika-chan!”

“I-it’s okay, Kaede-once-chan. You don’t have to worry about that!”

“No! Yuya-kun, I’m going to go buy some clothes that will look good on Rika-chan now! I’ll leave the pictures to you!”

Before I could answer, Kaede pulled Rika-chan’s hand and ran off in a mad dash. Left alone, I took a bite of the untouched crepe and decided to head for the photo development.

You’re not going to claim that all the clothes in front of you look good on her, and buy an entire shelf, are you, Kaede?

# Chapter 90 Making her into a dress-up doll

I selected some photos from the data on my phone that I wanted to develop and was waiting for them to be finished when I got a call. The caller was Kaede. I wondered what was going on.

“Hello, what’s wrong, Kaede?”

“Help me, Yuya-onii-chan! Kaede-onee-chan! Kaede-onee-chan...!”

What I heard was Rika-chan’s voice. She seemed to be in a great hurry. Did something happen to Kaede!?

“What’s the matter, Rika-chan! Calm down, can you tell me what’s going on?”

“Y-you see! I was out shopping for clothes with my Kaede-onee-chan. But now, Kaede-onee-chan has gone a little crazy. She’s annoying the shopkeeper. So hurry up and come help me, Yuya-onii-chan!”

Hmm? Annoying the shopkeeper? Kaede? Why? As I was thinking that, Rika-chan let me hear what was going on in the store. The voice that popped in was—.

“So! Let me buy all your clothes from here to here! I’ll be fine with the money! You don’t have to worry about me! — Why can’t I do that!?”

“... I think I got the gist of it.”

“That’s what I was talking about, so come quick! I’ll be waiting for you! In the super express store!”

I suppressed my temples at the unexpectedly predictable turn of events. Sure enough, Kaede had gone off the rails, hadn’t she? ‘I’m glad I made her into a dress-up doll to see which clothes would suit Rika-chan, but she’s so cute, I can’t choose. Then I’ll buy them all!’ I’m sure that was what she thought. She may have thought it was a good idea, but of course, the store would not let a high school girl buy multiple shelves.

“But, well. I don’t know how I feel about it.”

I muttered to myself as I received the well-timed photos and checked the finished product. Rika-chan’s sunflower-like smile in the photo was like holy water that healed the heart. By the way, Kaede standing next to me smiling was definitely like a saint. I imagined her as my future wife.

“No. This makes me very happy.”

Shaking my head, I put the photos into the three envelopes I had received. One for Rika, one for Kaede and one for me. The one for me was for my personal enjoyment. What was shown was a secret.

“Well, I guess I’ll go stop Kaede, who is running amok.”

I put the photos in my bag and hurried to the store where they were. A runaway robot wouldn’t stop until its power was turned off, but would it really be able to stop Kaede?

\* \* \* \* \*

I saw Rika scurrying in front of the store. I guess she couldn’t wait to see me, because she jumped up and down and waved as she noticed me.

“You’re late, Yuya-onii-chan!”

“Hahaha...I’m sorry, Rika-chan. So, what’s Kaede up to now?”

“You’ll have to see that for yourself. Ugh... I’m more embarrassed than she

should be.”

What kind of behavior makes a first grader feel embarrassed? Rika and I walked into the store with apprehension. What I saw was Kaede confronting the clerk with a puffy face that looked like she was grunting. Seriously?

“Why, sir? Why won’t you let me buy them? These all look good on you, don’t they, Rika-chan? Aren’t they cute? So please let me buy them all!”

Ah, yes. I know exactly how Rika-chan feels about this. If people keep telling you that everything looks good on you and that you look cute, you might be happy at first, but then you will become embarrassed and want to scream for them to stop. But Kaede didn’t. Even the clerk was reluctant.

“No, that’s why... you can’t have everything...”

“It’s okay! I’ll tell my father! He’ll be more than happy if I tell him that I bought a lot of clothes as a rehearsal for when I have children in the future!”

The clerk looked at her like she was crazy, but actually she wasn’t. The entire family was so crazy that they were willing to listen to their only daughter Kaede’s first and biggest request, ‘I want to live with him’. They would surely be happy to pay for it all.

“Ugh... If this happens, Yuya-kun will have to persuade him too... Ah, Yuya-kun! I’ve been waiting for you! Now, come with me to persuad—... ouch!”

I swung a chop at Kaede’s head without question, my face flushed red with shame. I was like a stubborn old man who believed that hitting the TV would fix it when it was no longer working. Still, this was the only way to stop Kaede’s crazy rampage.

“I’m sorry, I’m very sorry for the inconvenience. We’ll make sure to choose and buy properly. Again, I’m really sorry.”

Ignoring Kaede’s teary eyes, puffed out cheeks like a blowfish, and protesting gaze, I bowed to the clerk. He smiled bitterly, said, “Yes, please

take your time and make your choice,” and walked away. I’m sure he would be staying in the back, sighing profusely.

“Mou! Don’t you want to see a cute Rika-chan, Yuya-kun! Don’t you think all of this would look good on Rika-chan!?”

“No, that’s what I think too, but... as expected, I’m not sure about all of them...”

Kaede wasn’t convinced! The clothes on the shelves that she pointed to were indeed all cute. From dresses to T-shirts perfect for the coming season. There were also skirts, pants, and everything in between. It was understandable that she was troubled, but still, she shouldn’t be buying from the shelves.

“We’re going to have a fashion show when we get home! It’ll be fun for sure!”

“Yeah, that would be a lot of fun, but let’s forget about buying entire shelves first.”

“Why is that? You don’t understand, Yuya-kun!”

Kaede stomped her feet on the ground with a dum-dum. Rika-chan was completely taken aback. I felt the same way, but as her boyfriend, it was my job to calm her down.

But what to do? I couldn’t pick out the cutest outfit that would look best on Rika out of all these clothes. I moved my eyes quickly from side to side to observe my surroundings, and I noticed something. This is it.

“I’ll have to call my father and ask him to buy it for me...”

“Kaede! If you’re going to go through the trouble, why don’t you buy some clothes for yourself too!?”

“... Eh? Me too?”

“Look, it’s like these two mannequins’ coordination. How about Kaede and Rika wearing the same outfit? Maybe we could call it mother-daughter

coordination? I think it would be really cute!”

I pointed to two mannequins on display, one mother and one child. They were wearing a white dress with a floral pattern and a thin cardigan over it. The spring-like outfit, just right for the coming season, created a mature female atmosphere when Kaede would wear it, and accentuated the cuteness of a young girl when Rika would wear it. This was exactly the kind of outfit that would suit the two of them.

“Maybe you’re more like sisters than parents and children, but I think I’d look good for both Kaede and Rika-chan, right? I’d love to see you two side by side... you know.”

I scratched my cheek, looking absentmindedly far into the future as if to cover up the fact that I had just smiled just thinking about it. Kaede’s eyes widened and she stared at the mannequin for a few seconds. The pouty face turned into a debauched face.

“Yuya-kun, if you insist so much, I’ll coordinate with Rika-chan as mother-daughter. Ehehe.”

Yes, yes, yes! Mission successful! I turned around and gave Rika-chan a thumbs up! I thought she’d give one back to me, but for some reason, Rika-chan’s cheeks were flushed and she was looking down. Why?

“Matching with Kaede-onee-chan... I’m too embarrassed to do it...”

“Ehehe. That’s not true. Come on, Rika-chan. Let’s go to the fitting room together. We need to show Yuya-kun our mother-daughter coordination.”

Kaede, who had a determined look on her face, grabbed Rika’s hand that was hiding behind my back and dragged her away. I heard cries for help, but I ignored them and wiped the sweat from my forehead.

Phew. What a relief.

# Chapter 91 I need matching pajamas

By the time we got home from dinner, it was already close to 9pm. I sat down on a chair in the living room and stretched out, looking at Kaede and Rika-chan sitting on the sofa. The two of them were watching a special effects hero movie from the past in a friendly manner with great enthusiasm.

“Oh...Kaede, Rika-chan. You can watch a movie, but why don't you get redressed? You're going to get wrinkles in your brand-new clothes, aren't you?”

“It's okay! We can stay like this until you get in the bath! Right, Rika-chan!?”

“Yes! It's a matching outfit with Kaede-onee-chan's! I want to wear it forever!”

“Mou! You're really cute, Rika-chan! Then maybe we can go buy matching pajamas tomorrow! We can leave those at home and you can come stay with us whenever you want!”

“That's good! Yeah, let's do that! Is that fine, Yuya-onii-chan!?”

As for me, I'm not reluctant to do so, but I think Taka-san would probably cry if she started coming over to my house more often. On top of that, I'd probably be shut down. ‘What did you do to my Rika!?’ And so on. But...

“Of course, Rika-chan. For cute pajamas, we'll have to pick them out.”



No matter how angry Taka-san got, in the end he wouldn't win against Rika-chan's tearful plea. And then there was also the final weapon, 'I hate you, Dad!' Once she says this, Taka-san would turn white as ashes.

"Now that we have Yuya-kun's approval, let's go shopping for pajamas tomorrow! I've been wanting some spring and summer pajamas too, so it's perfect. Let's make sure they're cute and matching."

"Then why don't you make Yuya-onii-chan wear matching ones too! The three of us can sleep in the same pajamas!"

"That's a great idea! So, Yuya-kun, we're going shopping again tomorrow, is that okay? Isn't that amazing?"

I didn't have the right to refuse, and I didn't intend to refuse. Wearing matching pajamas with Kaede wasn't a bad idea, in fact it was a superb one. The current fuzzy pajamas were fine, but what would she wear for spring and summer? Will the pajamas be thinner and show more skin? If I'm tempted in such a way...

"Hey, Kaede-onee-chan. Yuya-onii-chan looks like he's thinking about something deeply, what is that thing he's thinking about?"

"Mmm. That face must be the one that's fantasizing about me and Rika in our pajamas. I'm sure he must be thinking of something n\*\*\*\*\*y."

"What's wrong with thinking of Kaede in her cute pajamas... I'm sure that since it's Kaede, she's probably going to tease me by wearing a camisole and shorts combination, right?"

'Urks!' My fantasy was confirmed when she reacted with the classic and obvious reaction that was unheard of nowadays. I guess I would have to be prepared for this tomorrow night. No, the real thing would be the night after Rika-chan leaves, right?

"Oh, even Rika-chan can tell from the look on your face now! Yuya-onii-chan, I bet you're imagining flirting with Kaede-onee-chan! Mou, you can't think of that anymore!"

‘You have no sense of decency,’ Rika added. I don’t understand. If you’re telling me that, then look at Kaede’s face when she’s holding you. She looks like she’s about to slobber all over your face. Isn’t that exactly the face of a person who is thinking about such a thing?

“Ehehe. Yuya-kun’s fantasies of flirting with me... guhehe.”

“Kaede-onee-chan is broken...”

“No, this is Kaede’s normal behavior, Rika-chan.”

Because otherwise, she wouldn’t have tried to assault me in the bath on the first night we lived together, and the next morning, she really did assault me. She wouldn’t say that she couldn’t sleep unless I gave her a hug. Well, I have no objection to having Kaede as a hugger because it makes me happy too.

“... You two are too lovey-dovey, you know? Are you going to flirt when Rika gets home?”

“Which side is white and which is black? – N-no, I won’t. It’s not like I’m going to flirt when Rika-chan leaves, you know?”

Rika gave me a cold look and made a comment that made me doubt her age, so I reacted reflexively, but the important thing was what she said next. It was normal after Rika-chan left, you know? It was just normal... to flirt, I guess.

On the screen, the main warrior transformed into his strongest form, which was only available in the movie version, and delivered a kick to the enemy.

“... Yuya-onii-chan, you baka.”

I felt like I now understood how the monster felt when he was hit by the special move and exploded.

# Chapter 92 Rika-chan wants to take a bath with Yuya-onii-chan

Since Kaede had become immersed in her imaginations, we decided that there was no point in watching any more movies, so we decided to start getting ready for bed.

“Ehehe. In matching pajamas with Yuya-kun... ehehehe...”

It was no good. My girlfriend didn't seem to be coming back from her dream world. I'm sure Kaede was having a lovey-dovey paradise with me in her head. I'd really like to see her make it about 80% of the way to reality.

“Hey, Yuya-onii-chan. Let's take a bath together for the first time in a while.”

“Yeah, I guess so. It's been a while since we've been in one together.”

‘Yay!’, Rika-chan said happily, and went to her bedroom to get her bath set. I remembered that I had taken a bath with Rika-chan when she was still in kindergarten a few times when I stayed at Taka-san's house. It was funny how she broke Taka-san's heart when she said, ‘Not with Daddy!’

“... Yuya-kun. What did you mean by that?”

A wobbling Kaede, who had positioned herself behind me, killing her presence as if she was a ghost, asked me a question in a whisper. The sound of her voice was laced with murderous intent, and if I turned around carelessly, a small knife would be pointed at my heart through the gap between my ribs, my life would be cut short without me being able to speak. But if I don't look back and answer the question, if I can't convince Kaede, then the same fate awaits me.

“Hey, Yuya-kun. If you don’t tell me, I won’t understand, okay? What did you mean by that?”

“...”

“Rika-chan and you are going to take a bath together for the first time in a long time. Isn’t that what you said? When I asked you if you wanted to take a bath with me, you stubbornly resisted, so why...? Hey, why is that?”

Kaede wrapped her arms around my waist and pulled me close to her. She put her chin on my shoulder and blew her breath in my ear. A shiver ran down my spine. I tried to open my mouth, but she bit my earlobe to match.

“Ka-Kaede—!?”

“I want to take a bath with you, Yuya-kun, you know? Isn’t that okay?”

The sweet and lustrous voice hit my ear for a change. She continued to bite and deliberately pressed her chest against my back, which was the best thing ever. Kaede’s body heat was slowly melting my ability to think.

“Hey... Yuya-kun. Me too... fuuu... we can take a bath together, right? The three of us... fuuu. Shall we go in?”

“A-ah... okay. All right, just... just stop. Don’t bite my ear.”

“Fufu. Thank you. I’ll go prepare myself then. Please, please don’t run away, okay? That’s why, please wait a little, Rika-chan.”

EH!!? Rika-chan!? With that one word, my reasoning rapidly came back to life. I slowly turned around like a broken mechanical doll, and there stood Rika-chan, holding a bath set and looking like a demon.

“... Yuya-onii-chan, you cheater.”

“Isn’t that too awful to say, Rika-chan!?”

It was one word. But Rika-chan, who had hit me with a precise heartbreak shot, turned on her heel to follow Kaede. I fell to my knees and let out a big

sigh. The scheming Kaede had given me a drink.

“I didn’t know that you still held your rivalry against Rika-chan... how mature of you, Kaede.”

I had no right to complain about Kaede since I was somewhat in a good mood after being closely pressed against her chest and having my ear sweetly bitten, but still, I could at least complain that it was a criminal move to do it knowing that Rika-chan was there, couldn’t I?

‘—No, you can’t. You have no right to complain.’

I thought I heard Shinji’s voice denying me with his eyes.

## Chapter 93 Kaede, New Style

Now, it was confirmed that the three of us would be taking a bath together, and I was washing Rika's head while wearing my swimsuit as usual.

“Why are you wearing a bathing suit to take a bath?”

I got the obvious reaction from Rika, but I still couldn't take a bath with Kaede without wearing these. Reason? Of course it was because otherwise my own reason would be blown away along with my consciousness.

“Rika-chan, do you have any itchy spots?”

“Yeah! It's okay! You're so nice and gentle, unlike my dad.”

She gently washed Rika's hair, being careful not to get any foam in her eyes. It seemed that Taka-san was scrubbing her hair roughly, and Rika informed him that if he washed her hair again like that, she would never take a bath with him again! Poor Taka-san.

When having finished washing, take a shower and rinse off. After that, put on Treatment and carefully wash again. Yeah, it was all shiny and glossy.

“Thanks, Yuya-onii-chan! Rika-chan will soak in the bath first then!”

“Yeah. I'll go in after I wash up, so you can have a nice relaxing soak first.”

As I heard the reply “Yes,” I also took a shower and then washed myself. By the way, Rika-chan and I were the only ones here. What was Kaede, the star of the show, doing? I wondered what Kaede was doing.

“...Since it's Kaede-onnee-chan, I'm sure she'll try something...!”

“How is Kaede treated in Rika-chan’s mind!?”

Did she think she was a strategist or something? Did she think that Kaede created this situation of the three of us taking a bath together in order to succeed in her strategy of appealing to Rika-chan as a proper wife and at the same time making me nervous so that she could get a tease out of me?

“No, no matter how much Kaede does, she won’t do anything stupid. I’m sure she’ll come in her bathing suit like she always does.”

“... So why are you wearing a bathing suit to take a bath? If you’re embarrassed, you shouldn’t have gone in there with her.”

You were right. You were absolutely right, Rika-sama. I couldn’t even muster the sound of dry laughter anymore. I just had to smile bitterly and make up for it.

“—Here you go! Now, Yuya-kun, please wash my hair too!”

With a loud bang, Kaede arrived majestically into the bathroom. No, I didn’t want you to make a loud noise because it would startle me. I mean, what was up with your outfit? You were not wearing your usual school swimsuit?

“Fufufufu. I’ve prepared for something like this to happen! If it’s always the same, Yuya-kun will get bored, so this is a countermeasure!”

“...Could it be that Kaede-once-chan’s is... that?”

“...Don’t comment on that, Rika-chan. Kaede is, yes, that. Like an incurable disease that turns me foolish sometimes.”

The first grader said in an exasperated voice, ‘I see’. It was no wonder. Kaede-san, who turned back and forth, was certainly wearing a swimsuit, but unlike usual, it was a proper swimsuit.

The color was a lovely pink. A one-shoulder flare that would make you think she was taking it off for a moment. It wasn’t only cute, but s\*\*y as well, since one side of the body was exposed. In addition to that, it came with a frill that further emphasized the appeal of her b\*\*\*\*\*s. The bikini panty was

also decorated with frills, and the ribbon attached to one side was like an accent, which was also cute.

This was the real deal. It was the perfect outfit for summer. Even if she went swimming in it, she wouldn't feel uncomfortable and would attract the attention of many men. I'm starting to get irritated just thinking about it.

"Please don't worry. The only person who can do what he wants with me is Yuya-kun."

Kaede said in a sweet voice as she gently took my hand. I felt embarrassed when she suddenly declared that. Feeling embarrassed, I quickly averted my gaze.

"That – is – right. Hey, Yuya-kun. How do you like this swimsuit? Is it cute?"

"O-of course. It looks good on you. It's so cute, I'm sure no one looks better in that swimsuit than Kaede."

Please don't make me say it! I'm so embarrassed that fire is about to burst out of my face. But someone once told me that if you think something is cute, you have to put it into words and say it.

"Fufu. Thank you. Well then, Yuya-kun. Let's have a wash – as usual. We've done a lot of walking today, so please give me a thorough massage, okay?"

"Oh, yeah. Okay, okay. Well, I'm going to wash you then, so can you sit down?"

'Yes!', Kaede cheerfully sat down on the bath chair. I picked up the shower again and was about to flush her back when I remembered that someone was soaking in the tub. I looked at her fearfully, and sure enough, Rika-chan was staring at me with a devilish expression.

"Ri-Rika-chan. Are you okay? You're not flushed, are you?"

"... I was watching the two of you interacting and it made me light-headed."



“That’s a big deal! You need to get out of there and hydrate quickly. I’ll go with you.”

“It’s okay, Kaede-onee-chan. I can do it all by myself.”

Rika said in the coldest voice I had ever heard and quickly got out of the bath. Then, just before I left the bathroom, she peeked out the door and said something.

“Yuya-onii-chan, you pervert.”

Why me!? Why was I the n\*\*\*\*\*y one!? If anything, Kaede was more aggressive and daring!

“Now that Rika-chan is gone, too. From here on out, it’s adult time, right?”

“That time will never come. Never.”

Sighing heartily, I stopped washing Kaede’s body and took refuge in the bathtub. Kaede made a pouting noise, but I ignored her. What the h\*\*l. You were taking it too seriously with a kid, Kaede.

“Rika-chan is pretty, but I’m Yuya-kun’s real wife. So I’m not going to go easy on her!”

“Rika-chan is cute, but I’m already all about Kaede. You don’t have to compete with her there.”

I reflexively replied to Kaede’s stupid comment, and she suddenly splashed me with the shower. It’s hot! It’s getting in my eyes!

“What are you doing all of a sudden, Kaede!?”

“It’s your fault, Yuya-kun. You suddenly say things that make me happy. It’s really not fair that Yuya-kun always takes me by surprise.”

After that, she shut my mouth and quietly washed her body, washed her hair, and got into the bathtub. As a matter of course, she positioned herself between my legs and silently asked me to squeeze her tightly, so I complied

with her request.

Kaede and I soaked in the hot water like this for a long time until we heard Rika's angry protest, 'Mou! How long are you guys going to flirt in the bath!?'

It was incredibly nerve-racking and a lot of mental endurance because she exposed a lot of skin, unlike school swimsuits, but I was able to experience a happiness that was worth it.

# Chapter 94 Sorting Order is Very Important

Rika's mood did not improve. She puffed up her cheeks and turned away when I tried to talk to her, so she didn't even give me a chance to explain myself at first.

“Hey Yuya-kun. Can you dry my hair for me? I really wanted her to scrub my hair, but she didn't, so let's dry her's instead. Right?”

In spite of this, Kaede grabbed her arm and demanded something like this, which made Rika-chan's mood even worse.

“Hmph! Rika-chan can do it herself! Kaede-onee-chan is such a spoiled brat! She's such a pain in the a\*s!”

Since she got angry, I thought I couldn't retort to it strongly. In hopes of lifting her mood and spoiling her, I received a hair dryer from Kaede and put my hand on her small shoulder.

“I'll dry you off, sit down. If you don't hurry, you'll catch a cold.”

“Yuya-onii-chan! Yeah! Thank you!”

A smile blossomed on Rika-chan's face, and she plopped down on the sofa and shook her shoulders with excitement. I laughed at the sudden change in her mood and gently dried her moist, wet hair with the hair dryer.

“Yuya-kun, Yuya-kun. Aren't you being unfair to Rika-chan? You didn't do anything for me!”

“Kaede-onee-chan is loved by Yuya-onii-chan enough, so why not! Even

Rika-chan really wanted to take a bath with Yuya-onii-chan... because Kaede-onee-chan would be such a fool...!”

The two girls conversed in a loud voice, trying to keep up with the sound of the hair dryer. Well, Rika-chan was right, Kaede was more foolish than ever in the bath, and I didn’t think she was mature enough. I’m also as guilty as someone for not being able to reject it and getting drunk on the sweet air.

“That’s why! Tomorrow, Kaede-onee-chan, you’re going in alone! Don’t get in the way of Rika-chan and Yuya-onii-chan!”

“N-no, I can’t! I can’t accept that! Yuya-kun, you want the three of us together, don’t you!? It’s fine, right!?”

I weighed the arguments of Rika-chan, who looked back at me like a cute child in retrospect, and Kaede, who clinged to me with dried tears in her eyes. The answer was obvious.

“...Let’s cool our heads a bit, Kaede.”

“Yuya-kun! No way...”

“Yes! That’s my Yuya-onii-chan!”

Rika was jumping in joy and Kaede was kneeling on the ground in devastation. Their contrasting reactions looked like a comedy to the casual observer, but I’m sure I wouldn’t survive if we did that. Specifically, the three of us taking a bath together.

“Uu... .fine. I’ll be patient tomorrow. Tomorrow. Only tomorrow.”

“I know you repeated it because it’s important, but I’m not going in with you every day early, okay?”

‘Gahhhh!’ said Kaede, who turned even more depressed as I spoke. Don’t get me wrong, we didn’t really go in together every day. Sometimes. Yes, sometimes. About once a week.

“Yuya-kun has become mean... I’m sad, so I’m going to go to bed first...”

“Make sure you dry your hair and brush your teeth first. And don’t doze off without it.”

“Ugh... the calm advice from Yuya-kun is soothing to my heart...”

After saying ‘I understand,’ Kaede left the living room with a staggered and unsteady walk.

“...Really, Yuya-onii-chan and Kaede-onee-chan are so in love. It’s like mom and dad.”

I’ll take that as a compliment, Rika-chan.

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After drying Rika’s hair, I quickly blew out the moisture with the hot air from the hair dryer. It didn’t take much time because she was almost half dry, so we went to the bathroom to brush our teeth.

Once that was done, all that was left was to get into bed and go to sleep, but that was the most difficult part, along with the bath. The question was, in which order should we sleep?

“Of course Rika wants to be next to big brother Yuya! I won’t give it up to Kaede-onee-chan!”

“Please don’t fight, please don’t fight.”

If Kaede sulks, it would be pretty scary to imagine what would happen after Rika left. I mean, I wonder if my reasoning would be able to hold out.

I opened the bedroom door, hoping that Kaede would have cooled down and regained her high school composure in this short time.

“—Hey, Kaede. I was wondering, where are you sleeping?”

“Heh. Can’t you see that?”

“Yeah. I know. I know it’s my pillow that Kaede’s face is half-in right now.

What's the matter with you?"

Kaede buried her face in the pillow again, as if she couldn't hear my cries. Wait! Don't blatantly take a deep breath and try to smell me! If it smells weird, I'll never be able to recover!

"Mmm...it's okayyy. I love the smell of you, Yuya-kun. Ehehe. I'm so happy."

"...Hey, Yuya-onii-chan. That's what this is, isn't it, so we can have a wrestling match? It's a challenge to Rika-chan, isn't it?"

"No, it's not. It's definitely not a challenge."

I stalled Rika, who was about to ring in the bed with her light-depleted eyes. Now, what do we do about this situation? I don't have to think about it.

"If Kaede won't move, I'll let you use my pillow. Rika-chan, come next to me."

I gave up on retrieving the pillow and let it take Kaede's place. And next to her, that was, between Kaede and me, I invited Rika to join us.

"I've always wanted to sleep like this, the three of us side by side, in the shape of a river. Rika-chan, let's sleep tightly together."

"Uh, yeah..."

Kaede hugged Rika without asking any questions. As soon as she got into the futon, her battle mode faded away and she started to get nervous. It was impossible to get out of this situation. I'm not sure how many people could resist the warmth and softness of Kaede's supreme touch. I have no intention of letting anyone else experience it, though.

"Fufu. Good night, Rika-chan."

"Fuuunyu... good night..."

She must have been exhausted after a day of frolicking and getting lost. It

didn't take long for Rika to leave for her dream.

“Good night, Yuya-kun.”

“Thanks for the day, Kaede. Good night.”

The long day was finally over.

# Chapter 95 Preparing breakfast while

The next morning, the three of us slept together in the shape of a river. When I woke up in the heat, I was shocked at the state we were in. I could tell that Rika-chan was hugging me. She was lying next to me. And I think that was cute. But what I didn't understand was Kaede.

“Mmm...Yuya-kun...”

Kaede, who was supposed to be sleeping on the other side of Rika, was somehow attached to my back. She doesn't wear a bra when she sleeps, so I felt her soft touch directly... I'm not going to say what.

I was stuck, but I had to get up and start preparing breakfast, so I carefully peeled Rika-chan off first, trying not to wake her. I'm sorry, Rika-chan. Sleep well, okay?

The next one was the back worm, which was a pain in the a\*s. At any rate, she held me tightly around my waist. Even if I tried to untie myself with a lot of force, it would shake her hands and make her put up a desperate resistance, so I couldn't untie it. Not at all.

I couldn't get anywhere, so I decided to sit up with Kaede hugging me. What do you think? Kaede, who should still be sleeping, got up from the bed with me. Which means that...

“Why don't you keep lying down sleeping there, Kaede?”

“...Ehehe. When did you know?”

“I rather wonder why you thought I wouldn't notice?”



When I tried to remove her arms from my embrace, she resisted with all her might, and when I tried to raise her, she tried to pull me back to the bed. There was no way she could have done that unconsciously. I sighed in disappointment.

Being careful not to wake up Rika, who was still sleeping, we got out of bed and headed for the kitchen. There was still some time before she woke up, so I prepared some sweet French toast for breakfast while I could.

“For that matter, when the h\*\*l did you move to my back? I’m pretty sure you were on the other side of me with Rika-chan between us when we slept, right?”

I asked Kaede, who was carefully slicing the crust of bread next to me, as I stirred the sugar, milk, and honey into the cracked egg.

“I woke up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom. Then I looked over and saw Rika sleeping in Yuya’s arms... and I couldn’t resist... hehehe.”

Kaede flicked her tongue out and poked herself in the head. There were only a few people who were allowed to make such a gesture, and Kaede was one of them. In other words, she was extremely cute, so any feelings of dismay I had were blown away.

“Besides... I didn’t give you my usual goodnight kiss last night...but I can do it now. So, Yuya-kun.”

Kaede put down her knife and held out her hands to me, demanding a hug. No, I wanted to hug her as much as I could, but first, I had to finish the preparation, you know?

“Mmm...Yuya-kun’s a jerk. So I’m going to have to use force.”

Kaede went behind my back and squeezed me, resting her chin on my shoulder. I patted her head gently while I transferred the bread she had cut into a Tupperware and dipped it into the egg solution so that the whole thing was well soaked. I put it in the refrigerator to cool, and before Rika wakes up,

I would bake it with plenty of butter.

“Here you go, Kaede.”

“...Aren't you treating me like air? Is preparing breakfast more important than a hug & morning kiss with your pretty girlfriend?”

“No, isn't it strange to compare that to this—Mmm!”

I turned around and was about to hug Kaede. But Kaede, with her cheeks puffed out, suddenly kissed me. Not missing a chance to catch me by surprise, Kaede repeated a few shallow kisses, which then turned into a dense one, and I experienced an arousing awakening.

“Nu... fufu. Yuya-kun, you have a pretty face.”

“You're the one, Kaede... you're so pretty.”

We looked at each other and were about to kiss again when we heard the door open with a bang. Rika-chan came in, still rubbing her eyes in her sleep. Kaede and I hurried away.

“Faaaaaa. Good morning, Yuya-onii-chan and Kaede-onee-chan... you're both early in the morning.”

“Ah, ahahaha. Good morning, Rika. You can still go back to sleep if you want, okay?”

“When I woke up, there was no one there. Ah, what's wrong with you two? Your faces are red?”

“I-it's just your imagination, Rika-chan! We're not doing anything wrong! Even now, we were just preparing breakfast! Nothing else! I wasn't kissing Yuya-kun!”

That was the same as a confession, Kaede. You see, Rika's eyes were now glazed over. And the blame was pointed at me again. It was strange, I thought Kaede was the one who kissed me, not me.

“...You gave her a good morning kiss in the morning, didn’t you, Yuya-onii-chan?”

That didn’t seem like a question, but more like an interrogation. Rika-chan’s gaze was as cold as a polar bear, and all I could do was chuckle. No, I had been thinking since yesterday, but wasn’t it too scary when Rika-chan gets angry? Was this what you call bloodline?

“...Even Rika-chan will kiss Yuya-onii-chan a lot when she becomes a high school girl! I’m not going to lose to Kaede-onee-chan!”

No, because by the time you go to high school, I would be almost thirty, okay? That would be dangerous, so don’t do that!

“Fufu. You wish. But Yuya-kun’s last name might not be Yoshizumi anymore by then, though.”

“But I won’t lose! Mom said that love has to be fought for! That’s why Rika-chan is not going to lose!”

Harumi-san! What the h\*\*l were you teaching your daughter? I mean, I had never heard of how you and Taka got together, but was that what happened!? Eh, I’m curious.

“I won’t give the title of Yuya-kun’s wife to anyone else, okay?”

“It’s not Kaede-onee-chan who decides that, it’s Yuya-onii-chan!”

Yeah, if I were to stay here any longer, I’m going to attract more fire, so let’s leave for now, shall I?

“Where are you going, Yuya-kun?”

“Where are you going, Yuya-onii-chan?”

A quick trip to the bathroom didn’t seem to be an acceptable excuse.

In the end, I was asked which one of us I was going to marry, and I was not allowed to deceive them. I guess I don’t need to tell you the name I gave

there.

# Chapter 96 Rikas return home and new thunderclouds

The time I spent with Rika-chan went by quickly.

On the second day, Kaede and Rika-chan went out shopping to buy matching pajamas, as they had announced. I couldn't accompany them because of club activities, but I'm sure they had a fun day. It was clear from the smiles on their faces when they greeted me with their brand new pajamas when I got home.

On the first day we had a problem with the bath, but to my surprise, Rika chose to take it with Kaede. I was grateful, but when I asked Kaede if there was something wrong with her sudden change of heart...

"Fufu. The answer to that is... it's forbidden."

The usual answer came back to me. Then I asked Rika about it, and I kind of knew the answer.

"You know what! Kaede-onee-chan, she was so sweet, she was like a mother!"

Yeah, yeah. I know that feeling. Rika must have sensed the air of a holy mother that Kaede-san exuded. I guess they got to know each other better through shopping.

"Yuya-onii-chan, I won't forgive you if you make Kaede-onee-chan cry!"

"I know, I know. I'd never do anything to make Kaede cry. I love Kaede, you know."

I didn't expect Rika to turn into my mother-in-law, but I'm glad to see that the two of them become as close as sisters, or even as parents and children. I'm relieved that there would be no more unnecessary fighting.

On the third day, we didn't go anywhere, and the three of us spent another relaxing day playing games and watching movies. Taka-san and Harumi-san were coming to pick us up that night. Feeling somewhat lonely, we played to the fullest.

“Ahh mou! Yuya-onii-chan, you're too strong! You should take it easy on me!”

“That's right, Yuya-kun! I don't think it's a good idea to blow up mercilessly against a pretty maiden!”

We were playing a two-on-one irregular team battle, which was a huge handicap for a big brawl, but I still didn't lose to them even once.

Their expressions changed from angelic smiles to evil smiles and they started tweaking the rules. They made it easier for me to blow up, they made it so that the only items that fell on me were bombs, and they didn't want to beat me, they just wanted to have fun with me.

“Hey! Yuya-onii-chan got caught in a bomb and blew up! Oh, no! I've blown up too!”

“Yuya-kun! It's not fair that you use your invincibility in time to rush in with a bomb!”

It was a hellish situation even if it was just for the sake of it, so it was a fine strategy to go in prepared to self-destruct. I'll be with you when you die, Kaede!

“Mou! You'll have to say those lines some other time! I'm glad to hear it, though!”

“I'll be with you until the day I die, Kaede! So please accept my bomb!”

“Don't fall in love with me while playing a gameeee—!”

In the end, Rika-chan's self-destructive suicide attack defeated me.

The sun had completely set and we had finished our dinner when the time came. The doorbell rang, announcing their arrival.

"Daddy's home, Rika—!"

When I opened the front door, Taka-san lunged at us vigorously to hug his beloved daughter whom he hadn't seen in a long time. Immediately, Rika let out a small scream and hid behind Kaede's back.

"... Welcome back, Taka-san."

"... Oh, I'm back."

Taka-san lowered his hands and leaned forward to straighten his back. Harumi-san smiled and held out the paper bag she was holding in front of me.

"Here's a souvenir. You two can eat it together. Was Rika fine? Did she bother you or anything?"

"Well. Rika-chan is a very nice girl and she didn't bother us at all. It was three days of great fun."

Stroking Rika, who was glaring at Taka over her back, Kaede answered with a smile, as if to dispel Harumi-san's unfounded fears.

"Listen, Mom! Kaede-onee-chan bought me matching pajamas!"

"Ara ara, I see. That's good to hear. Thank you very much, Hitotsuba-san. The money is..."

"No, don't worry about it. It's just that I wanted to wear matching pajamas with Rika-chan. Let's wear them together again and sleep together, Rika-chan."

'Yes!' Rika-chan nodded cheerfully and dragged her carry-on case, which was now a little heavier than when she came here, to Harumi-san's side.

Taka-san held out his hand to hold hers, but it ended up grabbing the sky, and I did my best to hold back my laughter.

“... Mmm! Well then, Yuya, Hitotsuba-san, thank you for taking care of her.”

“Don’t worry. It was rather fun, Taka-san.”

“Yes, please come back anytime, Rika-chan.”

“Yes! I’ll come visit you again, Kaede-onee-chan! Yuya-onii-chan!”

“Don’t be selfish anymore, Rika. Don’t interrupt Yuya-kun and Hitotsuba-san’s time together, okay?”

“That’s not true! They were flirting with each other with or without Rika-chan!”

Rika-chan, there was no need to tell Taka-san and Harumi-san anything unnecessary. You see, Taka-san now had an evil, impersonal smile on his face. Harumi’s eyes were wide open and she looked curious.

“It’s not surprising that youthful mistakes can happen, but you should do it in moderation, Yuya.”

“What the h\*\*l’s with that advice? Don’t worry, I know what it is without being told.”

“That’s good. Well, I’m sure you guys will be fine.”

“Keep attacking, Hitotsuba-san. Yuya-kun, as you can see, his guard is tight, but you have to push through with a series of strikes, okay? If you can’t push, hit. Don’t pull back, okay?”

“Yes! Thank you for your valuable input! I’ll just keep punching away!”

Hearing the conversation between the two women, Taka-san and I both sighed at the same time. Wasn’t this conversation gender reversed? Hey, Taka-san. Why were you putting your hand on my shoulder?



“I’m sorry for your loss, Yuya. Be careful not to get eaten at the very least.”

What the h\*\*l does that mean? Don’t give me that pitying look! It’s not fair for you to just walk away, Taka-san!

“See you later, Kaede-onee-chan, Yuya-onii-chan!”

Harumi-san took Rika-chan by the hand and they went home. Kaede smiled and waved them off. I was really tired at the end of the day.

“Fufu. That was a very fun three days.”

“Yeah, I guess so. I’m glad Kaede and Rika-chan got to know each other, too. That last conversation was unnecessary, though.”

“Oh, no need to go on and on, okay? I’ve heard some very good things. Be prepared for tonight—oh, there’s a phone call. From my mother?”

Kaede’s phone vibrated as she took it out from her pocket. It seemed to be a phone call, and the person on the other end of the line seemed to be her mother — Sakurako-san. What could she want?

“Hello, Mother? What’s going on? Yeah, yeah... I don’t really have anything to do tomorrow, but...eh!? Yeah... yeah, I get it. I’ll let Yuya-kun know. I’ll see you tomorrow. Good night.”

When the call ended briefly, Kaede’s smile was gone and she had a serious expression on her face. I couldn’t help but straighten my back.

“Yuya-kun. I know this is sudden, but my father and mother will be here tomorrow.”

Is this what people mean when they say that one problem goes away and another one comes back?

## Chapter 97 What to wear

I was lying down on the table in the living room. After seeing Rika and the others off, Kaede had received a phone call. The news came that Kaede's parents were coming to visit. They said that tomorrow would be the day. In other words, my life would end tomorrow.

“You're already overreacting, Yuya-kun. Let's just take it easy, take it easy!”

Kaede laughed and patted me on the shoulder, but unfortunately, my nerves were not strong enough to say, ‘Yeah, let's take it easy!’

“It's okay. My mother will help you, and she'll give you some assistance if anything happens. Besides, I don't know about the workplace, but I've never seen my father angry at home.”

Would that really be a relief? No, it doesn't. Because Kaede was the precious and only daughter of the Hitotsuba family. I wonder how he felt about such a cute little girl living with a boy from her class. Just thinking about it was frightening.

“No, it isn't, you know? I told you before, didn't I? My father and mother were very happy with my selfishness of wanting to live with Yuya-kun.”

That's right. The reason I was living with Kaede was because of her selfishness. The first thing that happened was that my dad, who was an a\*\*\*\*\*e, got into huge debts, and he cried out to his old friend Kaede's mother, Sakurako-san, for help.

Kaede persuaded Sakurako-san, who had no intention of helping me, and her parents, who were delighted with her first bout of selfishness, saved me and I found myself living with her.

“So, I don’t think they don’t have anything to say about Yuya-kun now. In fact, if they have, you can rest assured that I’ll make sure to say it back to them.”

Kaede looked very reliable as she clenched her fists firmly. I slowly raised my body and took her reliable hands in mine.

“Thanks, Kaede. I’ll do my best too.”

“Fufu. That’s the spirit, Yuya-kun. It’s okay. Everyone goes through the process of greeting each other before marriage. Worst case scenario, one punch and all is well!”

“...I hope it won’t hurt.”

The way you say it sounds like they wanted to punch me! That means there was a possibility that it would turn out like this! Right, Kaede!?

“... It’s okay, I’m sure, maybe [TL: In English.], it won’t come to that. My father is so kind that he can’t even kill a bug.”

“I’d still be relieved if you hadn’t looked away and told me directly...”

In other words, my anxiety only grew more and more.

That said, there was no point in dwelling on it any longer. They say that first impressions make all the difference, and I have to do my best to make Kaede’s father think that I’m the right man for the job.

“I think it’s better to wear formal clothes when we meet. But I don’t have a suit!”

I was caught off guard because I thought I would only need a suit when entering college or for my wedding ceremony at most.

“I think it’s fine to wear a uniform there; you don’t have to worry about that, you know?”

“A uniform, huh? Yeah, let’s do that! Ah! I need to iron my shirt! No, it’s dry

cleaning first! What should I do, Kaede!?”

“Yuya-kun, please calm down. The shirt will be fine as long as it’s washed and ironed normally. Besides, I’m sure my father will come dressed roughly anyway, so don’t worry about it.”

Are you sure? If you say that and they come to me in full formal attire, wearing a suit and tie, I’ll shy away and my soul would fly out of my mouth.

“Mou. If you’re so sure, do you want to go shopping for a setup tomorrow? I’ll fix it for you, okay?”

“Really! That would be great! Alright, we’ll go buy it first thing tomorrow morning!”

Now we’ve got one skin for the game! In addition, I need to prepare some gift wrapping, and I was going to be busy in the morning.

“But I’m not sure we can buy it tomorrow and bring it home right away...”

I had a feeling Kaede had said something very important, but my mind was more occupied with thinking about how to get through tomorrow’s big day.

# Chapter 98 When You Become the Coolest High School Boy in Japan

And the next morning. I immediately went to buy a suit. Kaede was the one who chose the store. Apparently, she had contacted Sakurako-san last night and asked her for any good stores. Incidentally, the store was very popular these days because they offered tailor-made suits at reasonable prices.

Immediately after entering the store with hope in my heart, I was met with despair.

“I’m sorry, sir. If you purchase today, the earliest we can finish your order is a week from now.”

That’s ridiculous. I was tempted to kneel down on the spot, but I held it in, smiled, said I’d think about it for a while, and decided to leave the store.

“That’s why I told you, you know. I said you can’t just buy it today and bring it home right away.”

Kaede said with a wry smile as I was about to break down in tears. Seriously? So it wasn’t like sewing your pants, it took that long.

“I think a week would be on the fast side, though. If it’s ready-made, you can take it home right away, but if you’re going to buy something, you have to get a good one.”

What Kaede said was most true. There was no doubt that you would be able to wear a custom-made dress for a longer period of time if you take measurements from scratch to fit your body, and make it with your favorite colors, fabrics, buttons, and other particularities.

“However, Yuya-kun is still in high school. Your body will still be growing, so I don’t think you’ll need a custom-made one.”

“... Then why did you bring me here?”

“It’s to calm down Yuya-kun, who’s been panicking since yesterday. It’s not like I’m holding a grudge because you didn’t give me a goodnight kiss or a hug last night, okay? It’s definitely not because I’m angry about that.”

“Yeah. I can see why you’re upset about it.”

I patted Kaede’s head who puffed out her cheeks like a cute little blowfish. I’m sorry for making you feel lonely.

“Ehehe... I’m not mad at you! But you can pat me more, okay? Right?”

As you wish, Princess. I’d like to pat her head until she was satisfied, but I was too embarrassed to do it in front of the store, and time was ticking away as it was, so I had to think of my next move.

“If it’s about that, please leave it to me! I’ll coordinate it for you, Yuya-kun! This will definitely make you look cool! You’ll be chosen as the grand prize winner of the National High School Boys Contest!”

“I’m not you, Kaede. I think that’s an exaggeration, right?”

“No, it’s not! Yuya-kun is cool! At least in my mind, he’s the coolest guy in Japan! The second place and below are also dominated by Yuya-kun!”

It would be wild to argue that this was not a ranking at all. But I didn’t know any man who wouldn’t be happy to hear her say this. In fact, I was both happy and embarrassed at the same time. However, because Kaede said it in a very loud voice in the middle of the street, the stares of the people on the street were warm.

“Oh... no! I knew I shouldn’t have mentioned the National High School Boys Contest!”

“No, I’m not going to do it in the first place, and I hope you don’t mind...,

but why?”

I just heard for the first time that there was a boys’ version of the high school girls’ beauty pageant where Kaede had won the grand prize, and why not? Well, I don’t have any intention of participating.

“Because... if Yuya-kun were to compete, his charm would spread throughout the country... Yuya-kun is my personal Yuya-kun.”

Oh, I haven’t heard Kaede say ‘personal’ in a while. And it came with the added bonus of her blushing cheeks and upturned eyes. Her cuteness was exploding.

“Uu... what’s with those eyes, why do they look like they’re watching over a kitten!? I’m serious! Or is it that!? Yuya-kun is also a boy, so do you have a desire to be popular!”

That’s strange. Kaede has now turned into a pain to deal with. She puffed up her cheeks again and glared at me with an upward glance. I felt like I was about to step on a cliff, but it was still cute.

“Don’t worry. I’m only looking at Kaede, you know.”

I gave Kaede a pat on the head and held her hand. Let’s get moving. We don’t seem to have much time.

“...Yuya-kun, you baka. You’re unfair. It’s a foul. But I love that about you, too.”

My heart started to beat a little faster as she smiled at me with a big smile on her face, her cheeks stained with autumn leaves. First of all, I want to hug you right now.

“Fufu. Let’s get moving, shall we? I’ll need some time to coordinate with Yuya-kun. You’re going to be wearing a lot of clothes, so please be prepared, okay?”

“You can’t get enough of Rika-chan, and now you’re going to use me as a dress-up doll? I wish you wouldn’t do that.”

“I want to see lots of cool things about Yuya-kun that only I know. Don’t worry. I’ll become a dress-up doll for you one day. I’ll adapt myself to your tastes, Yuya-kun.”

That being said, the cutest high school girl in Japan looked cute no matter what she wore. Whether she wears a dress, skirt, or pants, she always looks cute.

“So please... dye me in Yuya-kun’s colors, right?”

“—Kaede! What are you saying...!?”

Before I could ask the truth of the words that were suddenly whispered in my ear, Kaede started running. Kaede’s cheeks as well as her ears were red.

Well, I’m already dyed in Kaede’s colors, aren’t I?



# Chapter 99 Attack of the Hitotsuba family

I was happy to have completed my shopping and returned home safely, but Kaede's parents informed us that they would be arriving around 7 pm. As the time approached, I was so nervous that my heart was almost jumping out of my mouth.

"Hey, hey Kaede. Do I look strange? Is it okay?"

Fashion coordinator Kaede had picked out an outfit for me: a clean white high-neck sweater and a casual jacket in a subdued shade of dark brown. Underneath was a pair of skinny jeans. The female clerk had praised my simple combination but formal enough outfit and even asked me to take a picture with her. She quickly retracted that she was joking, though, under the pressure of Kaede's smile.

"Mou! There's nothing wrong with it, in fact, it looks good on you, it's cool, and if you want, I'd even like you to hug me, so please be confident!"

"Well, yeah? Well, that's good then..."

I think there were some unintelligible words mixed in at the end, but I must be imagining it. Yeah, let's put it that way.

"I wonder if my hair looks funny too? Do I have any sleeping hair or is there anything weird bouncing?"

"It's okay! Today's Yuya-kun is even more determined than usual!"

Every time I mentioned my anxiety, Kaede would praise me to death, but my mind would not calm down. In fact, I got more and more nervous, and my

body started to shake. Will I be okay like this? In fact, how can Kaede be as normal as she is? You're going to introduce your father to your boyfriend, or rather his potential son-in-law.

"That's because Yuya-kun is my boyfriend I'm proud of, okay? It's because I think you're such a wonderful person that I'm not ashamed to introduce you to anyone."

Gently squeezing my sweaty hand and smiling warmly like a holy mother, Kaede continued with her words.

"So be confident. Don't worry, I won't let them complain. Well, there's no way they will complain."

I was about to ask her what she meant by that. But now, the chime of doom finally rang. My heart thumped when hearing the sound. With determination, I stood up, held Kaede's hand tightly, and headed for the door with her.

When I opened the door, I found Sakurako-san, a beautiful woman who looked like a grown-up version of Kaede-san, and a slim, sincere looking man with round glasses standing there. Was this Kazuhiro-san, Kaede's father?

"Long time no see, Kaede. And Yuya-kun. How's life together? Is Kaede bothering you? Is she being selfish?"

"That's terrible to say! I didn't do anything Yuya-kun didn't want to and he didn't do anything to me. Mou, what are you saying all of a sudden!?"

She didn't do anything that I didn't like, but she did do a lot of things that I had trouble reacting to. She tried to take a bath with me, she asked for a massage in her bathing suit. It was a blissful moment, but a lot of work.

"Fufufu. Sorry about that. I was just wondering if you guys were getting along. But from the look on Yuya-kun's face, he seems to be fine. I'm sorry for the delay in introducing him. The man standing here, who looks like a human form of kindness, is Hitotsuba Kazuhiro, my beloved husband, Kaede's father, and Yuya-kun's father-in-law."

“Oh, Sakurako-san. What kind of introduction is that? There’s got to be another way to say it, right? What, I’m like a human form of kindness? Am I a robot from the 22nd century?”

Kaede’s father, Kazuhiro, protested with a wry smile when Sakurako-san said that he was like a human form of kindness. Then Sakurako-san added.

“Ara. If you’re a robot from the 22nd century, does that mean I’m its master? You can’t talk about master-slave play in front of the kids anymore. That’ll have to wait until tonight.”

“Ahahaha. I wish you’d let me hold the reign sometimes. I’d like Sakurako-san to see how manly I am.”

“Fufufufu. Is that true? If Kazuhiro-san says he’s going to show me his manly side, then maybe I’ll be a cute cat tonight.”

What the h\*\*l was this? What the h\*\*l was this conversation that’s going on in front of us right now? It was not like the backyard world of Shinji and Otsuki-san, but it was a unique world that was as sweet as honey. Was this what they called the strawberry space?

“Dad, mom. I know you want to make out with each other, but Yuya-kun is confused. Please wait until you get home before you do anything like that!”

I was about to get diabetes from the sugar content, but Kaede’s comment saved my life.

“Right, right. Well then, once again. Nice to meet you, Yoshizumi Yuya. I’m Hitotsuba Kazuhiro, Kaede’s father. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Y-yes! My name is Yoshizumi Yuya. It’s nice to meet you too.”

I took the offered hand and we shook hands. He looked slender, but his hands were large and strong. That’s right. This man was the bastion of the family and the president of a large company.

“By the way, Yuya-kun. You’ve already done that with Kaede, right? How did it go?”

“... Yes?”

What was this person talking about? When looking at Kaede, her cheeks were dyed red, Sakurako-san had a wicked face like a mischievous woman, what was this situation!?

“Eh, you haven’t graduated yet by any chance? Yuya-kun, how are you still a v—”

“Don’t try to say itttt—-!!!”

I screamed my soul out to the man who was going to be my father-in-law. This shouldn’t be something you ask when you first meet someone. If you did, I’d have a hard time answering, and I’d rather keep it a secret between us, or something.

“You can talk to me if you need anything, okay? I’ll teach you things so you won’t have any troubles.”

So, the reason Kaede sometimes made me very nervous was because she had the blood of these two. I am now sure of it.

# Chapter 100 A Question from My Father-in-Law

It was a good idea to gather at the house, but then the question arose as to where to have dinner, but to my surprise, Kaede's mother, Sakurako-san, had ordered sushi to be delivered. Wow, I could already tell that the food would be delicious just by looking at it. So this was the jewel box of seafood.

“Don't be shy, Yuya-kun. You have to eat a lot.”

Kazuhiro-san, Kaede's father, who had asked me a shocking question right at the start of the show, recommended it with a smile. As I was wondering whether I should take him at his word or not, Kaede mercilessly picked up a handful of sea bream with her chopsticks and threw it into her mouth.

“Mmm... Yuya-kun, don't worry about it. In fact, please don't hesitate to eat as much as you like. We're the victims who were suddenly made to witness them being lovey-dovey.”

Kaede started to eat the horse mackerel while pouting. [TN: A fish, not a horse.] Her pace of eating was a few steps faster than usual. Was she going to be okay like that? Weren't you going to be too full to eat the tuna?

“It's okay, no problem. Don't worry about me and eat too, Yuya-kun. At all. Why would they talk about their marital life in front of Yuya-kun, whom he's never met before? I can't believe it.”

“Oh, it's fine. That's how lovey-dovey Kazuhiro-san and I are, isn't it?”

“It's good that you're in love with each other. But please maintain moderation, moderation. You don't want Yuya-kun to get startled and run

away, do you?”

If you ask me, I'd say that Kaede's desire to live with me was a good thing, so I won't run away. However, I was taken aback when she suddenly developed a sweet and mature aura.

“Then what about Kaede? You're flirting with Yuya-kun, aren't you? I'd love to hear what you were up to.”

Father-in-law! Do you even know what you just said? Sakurako-san, why are you looking so curious? Kaede finally put her hand on the tuna and gulped it down, before taking a sip of the hot green tea and sighing deliberately.

“I don't have a choice. If you insist on asking, I'll tell you! The first thing I often do is take a mixed bath together! But Yuya-kun is shy like this, so I always have t—”

“STOOPP!! Don't you dare say anything more!”

What was she saying out of the blue with a confident look on her face!? I hope you didn't intend to tell your parents that you wear a bathing suit when taking a bath with your boyfriend because he was too shy! You were not going to reveal the truth, were you!?

“Mmm... how about this then? Yuya-kun, he's a surprisingly good massage therapist! He rubbed me right where I felt it! It feels so amazing.”

The way you say it! The way you say it was ambiguously lewd! You're also deliberately making the excited sound of your voice and the enraptured expression when recalling!

“And that...and I'm the only one who knows about this. Fufufu. Yuya-kun has a weakness for ear licking! He would always have a debaucherous face and squeal in a cute voice, so it's really... great.”

Ka-e-de-saaaaaaaaaaaaaan!? What do you think you're doing!? You see, the way Kazuhiro-san and Sakurako-san are looking at me has changed to something unexpected!

“Heh... So Yuya-kun, you have weak ears. But it’s nice, isn’t it, ear licking? I like it too.”

“It’s surprising that your weakness is similar to Kazuhiro-san’s. In that case, Kaede, I’ll teach you some things next time. In a very special way.”

It’s strange, I knew it was strange, this family. Kazuhiro-san winked at me as if he was happy to have met a comrade, and Sakurako-san started a secret conversation with Kaede. I’m sure they were talking about how to make me satisfied. And I’m scared.

“And yet...I’m relieved, Yuya-kun. You seem to be doing well with Kaede.”

“By tonight, I fear you have to defend your ears from Kaede,” Kazuhiro said as he was thinking about something silly. His voice was laced with relief, and his expression was soft. It was somewhat similar to the soft smile that Kaede sometimes had on her face.

“Yuya-kun. I have something I really want to ask you, if that’s okay.”

“...? Yes, what is it?”

I don’t know how to describe it. But the air emanating from Kazuhiro-san switched from easy-going mode to strict mode in an instant. I stretched my back and waited for his words.

“I’ve heard a lot about you from Kaede. And from the little time I’ve seen you, I know that you and Kaede are getting along well. As your father, I’m very happy to hear that. But that’s why I dare to ask you.”

He broke off his dialogue, and after a beat, Kazuhiro asked me.

“Yuya-kun, what do you think of Kaede?”

The look in his eyes was just like a sword, directed at me.

But I couldn’t let this intimidation get the better of me. I took a deep breath and spun my words.

# Chapter 101 Kaede for me is

Everything had been so sudden.

When I returned home, my parents had disappeared, leaving behind debts, and when I was about to be taken in by Taka-san, the goddess appeared like a shining star.

When Sakurako-san appeared, I was surprised and got to know that my debt was cleared up, but things progressed quickly and before I knew it, I was living with Kaede.

For me, the girl named Hitotsuba Kaede was literally the flower on the high mountain.

She was beautiful. She had a cute smile. In addition, she had excellent grades and was truly a perfect, flawless girl. I thought there would be no connection with her because she had changed her job from the flower of the high mountains to the goddess of heaven with the title of the cutest high school girl in Japan.

There were some things that I learned since I started living with Kaede.

I thought Kaede was different and distant from me, but then I realized she was just a normal girl. She laughed at simple things. She teased me every day, but when I teased her back, she sulked. She tried to tempt me often, but when I got back at her, she had no immunity and would quickly get embarrassed and turn red in the face. She was really just an ordinary girl who could be found anywhere.

But... I couldn't immediately respond to the feelings Kaede was giving me. I was traumatized by the fact that I was abandoned by the people I cared



about... my parents, who I thought I would be with forever. So even if I fell in love with her and wanted to be with her forever, I was afraid that she would suddenly disappear again. So I turned my attention away from Kaede's feelings.

Kaede supported me when I was so miserable. She told me it was okay, that she wasn't going anywhere and that she wouldn't leave me. Her words saved me, and when I thought that it might be fine, I fell in love with her more and more... At the same time, I realized that I couldn't go on like this.

I want to support Kaede, not just have her support me. I want to make Kaede happy. I knew I had to work hard for it.

I'm still a high school student, but I'm going to make Kaede happy. That's why...!

"It's okay. That's enough. Yuya-kun, your past has been so painful. Our daughter is so lucky to be thought of by her first love that much."

"Right. I didn't expect him to say 'Please give me your daughter!' I never thought I'd hear that!"

Kazuhiro-san and Sakurako-san looked at each other with an emotional expression, which gradually broke down and turned into a smirk. Then, instead of me, they turned to Kaede, who was sitting next to me with her face turned red and downcast.

"I'm so happy for you, Kaede. Your favorite Yuya-kun has declared to ask us for your hand in marriage, right? Hey, how do you feel now? How do you feel?"

"Iyaa. He was just how Kaede described him! He's a very nice man, isn't he! Don't ever let him get away, okay?"

"Ugh... Yuya-kun, you baka...! What the h\*\*l was that? Are you trying to make me die of happiness? Ugh... I love you so much, Yuya-kun!"

Kaede, her eyes slightly moist, hugged me uncontrollably. I hugged her

tightly, catching her in my chest. Her ears were bright red as well.

“Ara ara. Are you getting spoiled by Yuya-kun? If you hug Yuya-kun in front of your parents, Kaede won’t be able to say anything about me and Kazuhiro-san, will she?”

Sakurako-san’s agitation towards Kaede-san has been terrible since a while ago! But then I saw she had a beer in her hand. Does she change her job into a pain in the a\*s when she gets drunk? I’ll have to remember this.

“Yuya-kun, please take care of Kaede for me.”

“—Yes! I’ll make Kaede happy for sure!”

“Huh. I’m looking forward to the day when you and I can have a man-to-man talk.”

Kaede hugged me even tighter. Sakurako-san smiled again, and Kazuhiro-san laughed. I started to feel embarrassed too.

“Ka-Kaede. I think it’s time for you to leave, don’t you?”

“...I don’t want to. I’m not leaving. I can’t let Yuya-kun see my face now.”

“No, I’ll be rather curious if you’re going to say that?”

“No. I’m so happy to hear how Yuya-kun feels and I can’t stop grinning. My face is also hot, and I don’t want you to see my embarrassing face like that.”

I’m kind of embarrassed too when you say it like that. I also wonder what Sakurako-san and Kazuhiro-san would think of that.

“Kaede, you’re totally all over Yuya-kun. It’s kind of burning. I wonder if it’s okay for me to be all over Kazuhiro-san too?”

“Hahaha. I’m willing to do that, but you’ll have to wait until we get back. This is Yuya-kun and Kaede’s love nest, you know. Let’s go home soon so as not to disturb them.”

“That’s right! It’s time for me to make out with Yuya-kun now! Please leave when you’re done eating! Thank you for the sushi!”

Kaede, half embarrassed and half desperate, protested to her parents who tried to recreate the strawberry space in front of her. I mean, you said you were going to flirt with me, but you don’t intend to make up for not being able to do anything with Rika-chan, are you?

“Kaede. You can flirt all you want, but make sure you have to be prepared, okay? You can’t just go with the flow, you know?”

“I’m not lazy in that area. I’ve prepared properly.”

Yeah, it would be uncouth to ask what you have been preparing. I mean, wasn’t that something you should be telling me, not Kaede? In other words, Kaede, when did you prepare it?

“Well, okay then. Yuya-kun, I know I’m not the best girl, but please take care of me.”

“Y-yes. It’s my pleasure, and I look forward to working with you.”

“Fufu. You really are so determined, it’s hard to believe you’re that a\*\*\*\*\*e’s son.”

“Hahaha... well, he was like a role model of a bad person. It was a good lesson for me.”

Sakurako-san smiled wryly and said, ‘That’s true’. I laughed along with her, but it was my princess who seemed to be upset by the situation. She puffed up her cheeks like a blowfish in a very obvious way.

“I don’t know what she’ll do to me if I talk to Yuya-kun any longer. Kazuhiro-san, I think it’s time to go home.”

“Right. But before that. Yuya-kun, can I ask you one thing?”

“? Yes, what is it?”

“I think you’ll be fine... but be gentle the first time, okay? Also, make sure you—”

“Father-in-law—! Please don’t say it! I mean, I get what you’re talking about! Yeah, I know, so please don’t talk about it!”

They’re really embarrassing parents. But one day. I want to be a part of the family.

# Chapter 101.5

It was a summer afternoon. My best friend Shinji and I were sitting on a bench, hydrating and looking out at the field.

“I think we might be on the right track this year. Everyone is so motivated. Isn’t this all thanks to Yuya’s power?”

“No, that’s not accurate. It’s not my power, it’s Kaede’s power that has come to my support.”

I looked back at the field, dropping my handkerchief as Shinji laughed, ‘That’s true, too’. The first year members and the second and third year members were playing a red and white game. By the way, Shinji and I had already been replaced.

“It’s not a game when you guys are on the pitch!”

The manager gave us this kind of comment and we were happily replaced in the first half. I looked at the manager with a grudge and said, ‘Why don’t you let our golden duo run wild?’ Damn it.

“Well, well. That’s fine. The rest of us are also being replaced, so it’s the director’s way of being considerate. It’s dangerous to run around all the time in the hot sun.”

Shinji was right, playing a game in this goddamn hot sun could lead to heat stroke and dehydration, so this was a reasonable decision. Well, that was why we’re able to rest like this.

“More to the point. How did it go yesterday? You were with Hitotsuba-san, so you must have done a lot of things, right?”

“? Yesterday? No, it wasn’t anything special, but... oh, I see. No, nothing in particular. It’s a shame.”

I was expecting Kaede to do something like that, but sadly, nothing like that happened. Most likely, she had noticed it yesterday and hurriedly looked it up on the Internet, but it didn’t arrive in time. It was just like Kaede.

“If that’s the case, I guess you’ll be greeted by a bunny girl when you get home?”

“Hahaha. No matter how much Kaede does, that’s really not possible. It’s impossible.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Yuya-kun, welcome back!”

Shinji, from this day forward, I shall call you a first-class flag raiser.

“What’s the matter, Yuya-kun? Did you fall in love with me again? Are you admiring it?”

“...That, of course. You’re beautiful, pretty, and proud of yourself, and you’re dressed as a bunny girl. How can I not admire it?”

When I came home drenched in sweat, I was greeted at the door by Kaede, who was dressed as a bunny girl to my surprise.

She was wearing a traditional black leotard with black mesh stockings covering her slender legs, which showed glimpses of her skin. It also showed off Kaede’s firm body lines, and the cleavage created by her big b\*\*\*\*\*s was truly enchanting. In addition, she was tempting me with a slightly bent over posture, and my rational mind was telling me to escape barefoot right now.

“So, what are you going to do with this cute bunny, Yuya-kun, who has fallen in love with you? What are you going to do with her?”

I’d rather not lean forward, but this bunny girl started twirling around me to see whether I enjoyed it. What was this delightful and cute creature? I wonder

if I could hug her?

“Fufu. Now, now, what do you want to do with the bunny girl? Do you want to nuzzle her? Do you want me to do it?”

“Well then...I’ll take your word for it. I’m home, Kaede.”

I caught the cute bunny’s thin arms and gently held her close. Then I just closed my eyes and kissed her as usual.

“—Hmm. Ehehe. Welcome back, Yuya-kun.”

“I’m back, Kaede. Why are you suddenly dressed as a rabbit? You shocked the h\*\*l out of me.”

“If I was able to surprise Yuya-kun, then it was a huge success! So, how do you like it again? Is it cute?”

“Well, thank you very much, it looks really good on you. If I wanted to, I would turn into a wolf and eat you right now.”

“I did it! And that’s it, I’m not letting you sleep tonight! What a great day to be a bunny!”

No, no. You’re wrong, Kaede. It was not me who wouldn’t let her sleep, it was Kaede. You always wanted me to sleep, but you never did.

“Fufu. Well then, in anticipation of Yuya-kun’s transformation into a wolf tonight... shall we have a bath? Would you like some dinner? Or... m-e?”

“Of course, Kaede. That’s what I’d say, but I’m going to take a bath first. As expected, I’m sweaty and sick.”

“Then I’ll wash your back, Yuya-kun, who’s tired from club activities! I’ll wash you, the bunny-san, just like this!”

No, can’t you just wear the usual school swimsuit there? Then, what about the bunny’s costume then—! But, I have to ask you what’s more important than that.

“By the way, Kaede. Can I ask you one thing?”

“Yes, what is it?”

The bunny Kaede was hugging me tightly and staring at me with her head tilted back and her eyes looking up at me. It was not the usual, so the destructive power of cuteness was much different, but I was prepared to ask.

“Kaede, bunny day was yesterday, remember?”

“... Tehe~.”

I decided to forgive her because she was cute.

Such was the sweet night of August 3rd.



# Chapter 102 After the Storm, a Sweet Night Awaits

After declaring my feelings for Kaede, we had a peaceful and enjoyable dinner party. Kaede talked openly about what happened at school and how I confessed my feelings to her under the stars at the extracurricular camp. I was so embarrassed; it was like fire was emanating out of my face.

It was almost time for the party to end. As we sipped our tea, Sakurako-san looked as if she remembered something. I wondered if it was something important.

“Yes, yes! Miyamoto-san’s daughter will be entering the Meiwadai High School you guys are attending in April, so please be nice to her.”

Did Miyamoto-san have a daughter? And she was going to be our junior this spring. That was new info for me. Oh, Kaede’s expression doesn’t seem to be happy, what’s wrong?

“No... I see. Yui-chan is coming to the school, isn’t she? This is going to be a nuisance.”

“Eh? A nuisance? Why’s that, I’m really curious! Tell me what it means, Kaede.”

However, Kaede’s only response to my question was to raise her eyebrows, make a thoughtful face, and groan. Sakurako-san, who couldn’t bear to see it, told me the reason with a wry smile.

“Fufu. Miyamoto-san’s daughter, Yui, loves Kaede. They are close in age, so she looks up to her like her own sister. She probably doesn’t know that Kaede

is dating Yuya-kun, so I'm sure you'll be in a lot of trouble."

Sakurako-san, what was with the evil smile on your face, like you had just found a new toy?

"Oh, I'm sorry, Yuya-kun. Sakurako-san is right, you'll definitely be in a lot of trouble, so be prepared."

Even Kazuhiro-san! Don't meditate and nod your head! Why do you have to put your hands together as if you're praying!? That's inappropriate! I don't know what that means, but was Yui-san from Miyamoto-san's family that fierce!?

"To summarize, she's like a parasite. When I was little, she stuck to me and wouldn't leave me. Miyamoto-san couldn't stand the sight of that, so we went to separate junior high schools. I hope she's somewhat calmer now, but... you'll have to meet her in person to find out more about this."

I see. In other words, they went to school together until they were in elementary school, but Miyamoto-san couldn't stand to see how close she was, so he enrolled her in a different school for junior high school. But not for high school. But I don't know if her love for Kaede has been fixed. So that's how it went.

"I hope she won't bite Yuya-kun, but... well, if she does, rest assured that I will give her an iron fist punishment!"

"... Do you mean that I'll be physically bitten? Will she really do that? And Kaede will punish her then? What's with that, I'm scared..."

"It's okay! Before that happens, I'll tell her 'treat him as your brother'! That's how I'll introduce her to Yuya-kun!"

Yeah, I think that would be an act of throwing an entire can, not just oil on the fire. I had a feeling it was going to be a big fire.

"Well, anyway. I've to ask you to take care of Yui from April, Kaede. It'd be great if Yuya-kun could help out, too."

“Of course, Sakurako-san. I’m indebted to Miyamoto-san, so I’ll follow up to the extent I can. Please leave it to me.”

“Really, Yuya-kun, you’re so reliable. I can leave Kaede in your hands with no worries. Right, Kazuhiro-san?”

“Yeah, you’re absolutely right. Yuya-kun will be a good husband and a good boss.”

Kazuhiro-san and Sakurako-san were laughing heartily. Kaede was the only one who didn’t seem quite sure what to make of it. I wonder what was going on?

“... Yuya-kun is my future husband! I won’t give him to anyone!”

Kaede shouted, her cheeks puffed up like a balloon. Apparently, I’ve changed jobs from boyfriend to husband.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I’m sorry for being so abrupt today. But I had a great time.”

“I was touched beyond my years when I heard about Yuya-kun’s feelings for Kaede.”

The time was almost 10pm. Kaede and I were still on spring holidays, which was fine, but Kazuhiro-san and Sakurako-san had regular jobs. They couldn’t stay any longer, so Miyamoto-san drove us home.

“It’s a long night, you know. You two young people will have plenty of time to yourselves after this. We from the older generation have to leave.”

“Ara, Kazuhiro-san. Aren’t we still working too? We won’t let you sleep tonight, will we?”

“Ahaha. Can you give me a break on that, Sakurako-san? I have an important meeting tomorrow, and—”

“Are you saying you prefer the meeting over me? You’re awful, Kazuhiro-

san. I'm going to cry."

A blue vein popped up on Kaede's forehead and she was attached to my arm, as the two of them started making out in the doorway once again.

"Father, mother, please stop it! Please wait until you get home before you do anything like that! I want to make out with Yuya-kun as soon as possible!"

The volcano erupted, but what she said was not much different from her parents because she was covered in worries. In fact, Kaede's released strawberry space was stronger because she directly declared she wanted to make out with me. And since she said that, it was obvious how these two people would react.

"I see. To reveal your passion for him just like that. I get it, Kaede would love to make out with Yuya-kun as soon as possible! Okay, Sakurako-san. Let's get out of the way and quickly go home!"

"Right! We are not going to interrupt the first night of two young people's lives any longer!"

At the end of the day, they left with a smirk on their faces, which made me feel rather uncomfortable. It was as hectic as a storm when they came and when they left. But this was finally the end of a long day.

"No, Yuya-kun. I'm not done with you yet."

Kaede hugged my arms tightly and looked at me with moist eyes.

I know. You didn't have to say what you wanted to say. I had been saying for a long time that I had to settle things first. Now that I've done that today, I'll answer Kaede's feelings again.

"...I love you, Kaede. You, of all people."

I wrapped my arms around her waist and held her close, giving her a gentle, thoughtful kiss.

Just laying her lips on top of mine filled me with a feeling of happiness.

However, that feeling gradually turned into lust, wanting to feel Kaede's touch more and to be with her. And it seems that I wasn't the only one who thought so.

"...Yuya-kun, I also... I love you more than anyone else."

Pressing her face into my chest, Kaede said in a voice that seemed to fade. I hugged her even tighter, happy that she felt the same way. I'll never let you go.

# Chapter 103 The Small Things Before the Big Things

After seeing Kaede's parents off and kissing her at the door. Kaede and I walked awkwardly to the bedroom, but on the way, I forgot something important.

"Kaede, I need to take a shower..."

"Yes, you're right. We went out this morning, and you're sweating, aren't you? So, then, Yuya-kun, after you."

Normally, she'd definitely tease me with, 'Then let me come in with you! I'll wash your back!' But unusually, she asked me to go in alone. It was not that I felt lonely, or that it would be shameful because I wanted to soak in the tub with her and hug her. Totally, not at all.

"Seriously... Yuya-kun, you baka. Your back is blocking the way!"

Kaede, whose face was blushing slightly, pushed me and half forced me into the bathroom. It was like a lie that she didn't care if I wanted to go in alone, normally, she just charged in and tried to take a mixed bath whenever she could.

"I'm surprised that you're surprised that you can take a bath by yourself... I'm going crazy too."

No, it was not that I was going crazy, it's just that I've grown so attached to Kaede. Now that our daily life together has been established as a matter of course, I even think that the time we spend apart was stranger than the time we spend together, so my feelings for Kaede were bottomless.

“I can’t help it, I love Kaede so much, I...”

When Kazuhiro-san asked me about it, my feelings for Kaede naturally flowed out of my mouth. It had been quite embarrassing now that I thought about it, but what I had said was true, so I couldn’t help it. That was my way of settling things, and Kazuhiro-san and Sakurako-san accepted it.

That was why I’m here now, alone, cleansing my body.

When I imagined what I was about to do, my heart started beating abnormally fast. Apart from the fact that I was soaking in the bathtub, my body was heating up and my blood circulation was getting better, which made my lower body in trouble.

“Calm down, calm down, me. I-it’s okay. Yeah, I’m fine. I’m gonna be okay.”

I splashed the bath water on my face and tried to wash away my arousal, but it was no use. I decided to get out of the bath as soon as possible, wondering if I could really handle this.

“Here you go, Kaede. I’ve finished my bath, so... what are you doing?”

After drying my hair and brushing my teeth, I headed to our bedroom to find Kaede sitting on the bed, hugging my pillow as a cushion. Hey, pillow. You can switch places with me right now! The place in Kaede’s arms was for me only!

“I’ll go then. In the meantime, Yuya-kun, please cuddle my pillow, okay?”

After saying that, Kaede picked up the change of clothes she had prepared and left the bedroom quickly. I couldn’t stop her as she moved as quickly as a rabbit escaping from its cage. Once I was alone, I sighed and sat down on the bed.

“... Pillow, huh.”

I feel kind of defeated hugging Kaede’s pillow while waiting for her to come out of the bath as I was told, but the best way to calm down my feelings for

her, which were endlessly overflowing from my heart, was to be wrapped by her.

“Haa... smells good... calming...”

A refreshing citrus scent drifted from her pillow, calming my raging mind. In fact, if I wasn't careful, it was so pleasant that I felt like slipping away into a dream.

“I can't wait to... I can't wait to hug Kaede...”

A body on fire after a bath. The scent of your favorite person. On top of that, the mental fatigue I had accumulated over the past day. My consciousness was slowly slipping away in the face of this triple combo.



# Chapter 104 And the Night Comes to an End

“—Ya-kun. — Uya-kun! —Yuya-kun!”

“...Kaede...?”

I realized that I had just fallen asleep as my body was shaken. I unconsciously wiped at my mouth and found it slightly damp. Seriously, was I drooling on her pillow!? No, that was not what was important right now!

“Mou. Did you fall asleep because you couldn’t wait?”

“I-I’m sorry. I was smelling Kaede’s scent and it made me feel too comfortable... sorry.”

“Fufu. It’s okay. I’m not angry. More importantly... what do you think of this?”

When I looked at Kaede for the first time after she said that, I saw that she was not in her cute fuzzy pajamas that she always wears, but in provocative lingerie.

“Eh... could that be...?”

“That’s right. This is the lingerie that Yuya-kun chose for me. What do you think? It’s the first time I’ve tried it on...does it look good on me?”

That was one of the new underwear we bought the day I went to visit the shrine with Kaede. The orange floral camisole set. Her skin was slightly steamy after the bath. Droplets were dripping down her flowing collarbone, and forbidden b\*\*\*\*\*s were about to spill out which she could hardly hide.

She had a cute navel and was showing off her healthy, fresh legs without hesitation. I was at a loss for words.

“Oh, um... Yuya-kun? If you don’t tell me anything, I’ll get very worried...? Can you hear me?”

Kaede’s current appearance might be more seductive than the one without anything on. Because of what she was wearing, she complimented it by making me imagine and fantasize about what was underneath. I guess that was why I was getting so excited. I know you don’t get what I’m talking about, but don’t worry. I don’t know either.

“... I-I’m sorry. It looked so good on you, so pretty... you know, I just fell in love with it.”

So that was all I was able to put into words. I wish I could have said something clever, but that was the best I could do with my vocabulary. There were no words that could describe a real-life goddess.

“Fufu. Thank you very much. So Yuya’s eyes weren’t crazy, I guess.”

With a somewhat reassuring smile on her face, Kaede took the pillow from me in the kneeling position, threw it somewhere and hugged me.

“How long are you going to hug my pillow, Yuya-kun? I’m right in front of your eyes, remember? You should be hugging me. I mean, you know—”

This time, she wasn’t satisfied, so she put her hands on the hem of my pajamas and pulled them up at once with a cute shout. With the skill of a magician, I was made to strip naked. Seriously?

“It’s not fair only on me. Yuya-kun, please take off that... quickly...”

Kaede said in a muffled voice, clinging tightly to my chest as her face turned bright red. I hugged her gently and stroked her hair as if to comb it. I could hear her heart beating fast, but I wonder if it was mine or Kaede’s.

“I can hear your heartbeat, Yuya-kun. It’s very fast. Are you nervous?”

“Of course. And Kaede’s...?”

“Fufu. Of course I’m also nervous. My heart is pounding as if it’s about to burst. But more than that... I’m happy.”

Kaede’s hug on me increased in strength and we got so close that there was almost no space between us. Our bodies were on fire, almost burning from each other’s heat.

“Yuya-kun. Let’s be happy together. We’ll share all the fun, happy, and sometimes painful things together, and we’ll both be happy.”

“Yeah...I agree.. I’ll make Kaede happy. I’ll work hard for that.”

“No, together, we’re going to do our best. I want to make Yuya-kun happy too, you know.”

I had already received more than enough happiness from you. No matter what I said, Kaede would probably reply, ‘The same goes for me’. So without saying a word, I hugged her tightly.

“Yuya-kun. I love you.”

“Me too, Kaede. I love you more than anyone.”

No matter how many times I say it, no matter how many thousands of times I say it, it would never be enough for me to think about Kaede.

“I’m also thinking about you, Yuya-kun, to the extent that no matter how many times I say it, it’s not enough.”

Kaede said with a giggle, then pulled her face to my ear and whispered in a lustrous voice.

“Please hold me gently, okay?”

“... Ah, of course.”

And on this day. We spent a hot, sweet, debaucherous honey night that we

would never forget.

# Chapter 105 Sparrows Chirping and a Happy Morning

I woke up to the morning sun shining through the window. Feeling a pleasant sluggishness, I turned my attention to the person I love more than anyone else in the world, who was sleeping peacefully in my arms without a stitch of clothing.

“Mmm... Yuya-kun...”

I don't know what kind of dream I'm dreaming, but I'm glad that I'm in it. I gently patted her head and felt the joy of being united with Kaede.

“I love you, Kaede.”

I kissed her gently on the cheek and hugged her again, and her kittenish eyes slowly opened. It seemed that I had woken her up.

“... Yuya-kun, I love you too.”

Kaede rubbed her cheek against my chest as if she was rubbing her own scent on it. No, I'm sure you did a lot of marking yesterday.

“It's important for me to show that I'm Yuya-kun's master. If any strange insects get attached to you, it would be a disaster. I'm the only one who's allowed to stick to Yuya-kun!”

Of course that was true. I didn't want to be attached to anyone other than Kaede, and I'm pretty sure I'd lose my mind if I saw a weird bug on her.

“Fufu. I guess we're both possessive.”

“... I’m sure of that.”

The morning hours we spent hugging and talking about trivial things were so peaceful and happy. I just felt like wanting to take a nap.

“Nevertheless. Yuya-kun was amazing last night. You were truly a wolf. I was eaten from corner to corner.”

“... Isn’t that exactly what we both want?”

Last night Kaede was outrageously cute, evolving from a kitten to a leopard, and at the same time she was so bewitching and beautiful that if succubus existed in reality, Kaede would probably be one in bed. Anyway, it was dangerous. It was so dangerously exciting that it blew up my vocabulary along with my reason.

“By the way, Yuya-kun, what kind of position do you like? I like to stay in close contact and kiss you face to face.” [TL: So missionary position?]

Instead of dropping a hand chop on her head to quell Kaede’s outburst as usual, I kissed her and covered her lips. She seemed surprised for a moment, but soon her tongue twined around mine in a debaucherous, sweet and thick way.

“Mmm... haa... Mou, it’s not fair to be so sudden. And when kissing me like this... it turned me on.”

Kaede’s eyes lit up with a mysterious light as she licked her lips and traced my body with her white fish-like fingers. I can’t let her turn into a succubus again, even though I’ve sealed her away last night!

“That’s not fair of you, Yuya-kun. You’ll get me in the mood for it, so... let’s pick up where we left off yesterday, shall we?”

Then we kissed again, and we made love.

“I’m so happy to have met you, Kaede. I’m so happy.”

“Me too. I’m so happy to be with you, Yuya-kun.”

The season when cherry blossoms were in full bloom.

My new school life was right around the corner.

But first, just a little more. Let me enjoy our private time together.

# Chapter 106 Starting Second Grade Today

Spring break was over, and the second season was about to begin. One year ago, when I first entered the school, I couldn't have imagined that I would be walking hand in hand with my girlfriend under the cherry blossom trees in full bloom.

“? What's the matter, Yuya-kun? You have such a satisfied look on your face. Oh, you're happy that you can hold hands with me and go to school! But, I'd be embarrassed if you said something like that!”

In the middle of the street, Kaede wiggled her body with her cheeks slightly tinged with vermilion. I didn't say anything about being happy, but I was not going to deny it because it was generally true, just because I haven't said it. Instead, I answered by patting her on the head.

“—! Yuya-kun! What are you doing all of a sudden!”

“You don't have to be so surprised... I simply wanted to pat Kaede on the head because you were so cute, was that wrong?”

“N-no, it's fine! Of course you can! It's all right!”

Kaede stretched out her chest. Then she pushed her head against my chest as if asking me to pet her more. If I were at home, I would hug her tightly and stroke her all over, but unfortunately, we were on our way to school. If I'm doing this here...

“You're still as lovey-dovey as ever, Yoshizumi.”

Naturally, I would run into my classmates. And there were only a few who



talked to me or Kaede in a dumbfounded voice.

“Geh... Nikaido...”

“Hey, that’s quite a reaction for a classmate, isn’t it? Isn’t it awful that the first thing after recess is that you react like a squashed frog?”

The person who spoke to me was Nikaido Ai. She had a neat and clean appearance with well-defined eyes and nose. She was a selfish beauty with moderately trained, toned and healthy limbs along with the twin hills that were firmly assertive. She was the expected ace of the basketball team and has been active since she joined the team.

Her short cropped hair and husky voice earned her the nickname “The Prince of Meiwadai”. She was very popular among the girls, and even as a guy, I thought she was handsome. If Kaede was the representative of the beautiful type, Nikaido was the representative of the cool type.

By the way, Nikaido and I had been in the same class, and we had spent a year sitting next to each other.

“Good morning, Nikaido-san.”

“Good morning, Hitotsuba-san. I get that you’re in love with him, but please do it in moderation, okay?”

I wanted to raise my voice in protest at the morning greeting, which was 180 degrees different from her attitude toward me, but I held back. If I’m defiant here, what would she say in return?

“You know what I mean. Yoshizumi, you’ve learned, haven’t you? I’m surprised.”

“Hey, Nikaido-san. Aren’t you being a little too harsh!? What do you think, at which niveau my intelligence is!?”

“Well... you’re as intelligent as a monkey?”

That was terrible! Why did I have to be told this by my classmates so early

after spring break! Can I cry?

“Fufu... really, Nikaido-san is very strict with Yuya-kun, isn't he?”

“It's okay. If someone doesn't inform the indiscriminate sugar-spewing Yoshizumi properly, there will only be more victims, right? Besides, Hitotsuba-san will heal the wounds he caused, so it's plus or minus zero, right? No, it's more like a plus, right?”

“No, no matter how much Kaede comforts you, you can't heal any wounds easily! I mean, what do you mean, 'victim'?”

“Good grief...you're still talking like that at this stage of your life. At this rate, many more students are going to suffer from sugar overload this year...”

Nikaido shrugged her shoulders deliberately. Was that what Shinji and Otsuki-san called 'strawberry space'? Wasn't that what all the couples in the world were forming, not just Kaede and I?

“... Really, you'd better stop, okay? Or is it useless to tell Yoshizumi that? Well then, Hitotsuba-san. I'll go ahead and leave you to his naiveté there.”

“Yes, leave it to me.”

Then Nikaido waved her hand with a fluttering motion and strode away. Kaede waved back, but I didn't have the energy to do so, instead I sighed heavily.

“Please cheer up, Yuya-kun.”

“...Thank you, Kaede. Haa... I'm getting depressed about watching the class change announcement. If I do not end up in another class with Kaede again, and in the same one as Nikaido, I might not be able to recover from this...”

Kaede laughed at my exaggeration, but I was quite serious. The main theme of today's trip to school was to confirm the class change. Depending on the content of the change, this year's high school life could turn into heaven or h\*\*l. But it was a bad start.

“It’s okay. We’ve made a firm request to God. No one can tear the bond between us!”

The expression on Kaede’s face, as she clenched her fists tightly, was somehow full of confidence. Was it possible that she had the confidence to be in the same class as me?

“Fufu. It’s not just Yuya-kun, okay? I’m confident that we can all be in the same class, including Higure-kun, Akiho-chan, and Nikaido-san!”

“...May I ask where you get such confidence?”

“Fufu. I told you, didn’t I, Yuya-kun? I said that we would be in the same class no matter what method I had to use. Let me show you the results of that!”

Kaede took my hand with a giggle and started running. Hey, it was dangerous to start running so suddenly! So I decided to run with her with a bitter smile on my face.

Please let me be in the same class as Kaede!

# Chapter 107 The Fatal Class

## Announcement

In front of the bulletin board set up in the schoolyard, there was a large crowd of students, clearly visible even from a distance. There were supposed to be two groups of students, one for the third year and one for the second year, but the line between these two was unclear.

“The second year class assignments are on the right. Fufu, it’s kind of exciting to go through this, it’s like an adventure!”

I’m sorry to say that Kaede’s tension was already high, but I’m rather disappointed. What was so exciting that I had to slip through the crowded train-like traffic to see the assignments? I mean, did everyone come to school this early? Today’s school day was supposed to begin at 9:30 am, and now, it was a little after 8:30. Weren’t they getting too carried away?

“It’s not unreasonable. Today is an important day for the year ahead. There’s nothing strange if you wake up early because you can’t control your excitement.”

“That’s right. Kaede, you were unusually up earlier than me. What time did you wake up?”

“It was after 5 am! Yuya-kun was sleeping peacefully; you were so cute.”

She smiled sweetly at me, and naturally, my heart thumped loudly. Kaede has always had a seductive smile on her face, but after our first night together, it seems that her smile has taken on a higher dimension. She has moved up from a girl to a lady.

“Getting up early is truly a virtuous thing to do. I was so upbeat in the morning!”

She hugged me tightly in her arms and gave me an angelic smile, making my heart beat faster and faster. In addition, it wasn't good to have my arms feel the soft and elastic twin b\*\*\*\*\*s whose curves couldn't be hidden by the clothes. This really wasn't good, because once touching it, I would never want to let go, because it would bring back that magical happiness in my brain!

“What's wrong, Yuya-kun? Your face is red, isn't it?”

“—! That's not true! It's the sunrise!”

I turned away as if to cover up my embarrassment at remembering the dazzling Peachland. [TL: He's recalling his first night.] Meanwhile, Kaede was smiling and laughing at me. In this case, I guessed what she might do next.

“Mou... Yuya-kun's a pervert.”

She whispered in my ear in a sweet voice that melted my brain and sent electric currents running through my body. I jumped back when she gently blew her breath on me. I could feel that not only my cheeks but also my ears were turning red.

“Ka-Kaede! I told you to leave that kind of thing at home! You know where we are!? At school!”

“Don't worry about the details. More importantly, let's see the class assignments as soon as possible!”

That's not true! It's a matter of life and death for me! Because the male students are looking at me like ‘You shall be in trouble soon’! Not only did they direct their gazes filled with hatred at me, I could also hear the voices filled with their grudges leaking out at the same time!

“That b\*\*\*\*\*d Yoshizumi... he's been killing it since the vacations...”

“I want to get my ears puffed by Hitotsuba-san too... so switch there, Yoshizumi.”

“Why do I have to be beaten with tons of sugar on the first day of school! S\*\*\*w you, meotoppuru!”

Yeah. I'll pretend I didn't see or hear all of it. I followed her back, witnessing the mysterious phenomenon of a natural pathway as she trotted toward the bulletin board. I wonder if there was some kind of invisible pressure coming from Kaede?

“So... My name is... oh! There it is! Second year, second class! Yuya-kun, your name is...”

Eh? What? You're making a faint voice as if you were witnessing the scene of a tragedy. I'm getting really nervous, am I in a different class!?

“... Yuya-kun. You'll have to see for yourself.”

“I know what to expect if you turn your face away from me so blatantly...”

With a sigh, I checked the names from the first class of the second year, skipped the second class, thinking I couldn't find it anyway, and looked through the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth classes, but I couldn't find my name. So maybe...

“There it is... my name is in here...”

My name was also written in the column for the second year and second class, which I had passed over because I thought it would not be there. I was surprised and touched, but my relief was greater than that. The moment I saw Kaede's tearful face, I had thought we would be in different classes for another year. I was really glad that wasn't the case. It was worth going to the shrine to pay my respects.

“Mou... Yuya-kun's reaction is a bit thin.”

For some reason, Kaede protested with a pouting face, but I breathed a sigh of relief because you acted weird, you know? Why did you make that face

when you knew we were in the same class?

“That’s the thing. It’s just a little surprise. Tehe.”

It was too falsely cute when she poked her head with her fist and stuck out her tongue. It had such a destructive power that I had to pull back my prepared hand chop. I coughed and regained my composure. In addition to Kaede, there were names of people I knew.

“So Shinji, Otsuki-san and even Nikaido are in the same class. That’s somehow too good to be true.”

“Fufu. That’s good, isn’t it? I have a feeling it’s going to be a very fun year!”

“I have a feeling it’s going to be a year where just as many things are going to happen, though.”

Kaede had a big smile on her face, filled with anticipation. I smiled bitterly, feeling a little uneasy. But we are all thinking the same thing. I was sure that my second year of high school starting today would be a fulfilling experience. After all, there were ball games, sports festivals, summer vacations, cultural festivals, and school trips. And then there was also the school trip and all the other events.

“Let’s make many memories this year, Yuya-kun!”

“Yes, you’re right. Let’s make a lot of memories, just the two of us.”

Then Kaede and I walked side by side to the classroom where we would spend our new school life.

# Chapter 108 The Promised Self

## Introduction

When I opened the sliding door of the classroom with a rattle, all the students who were already there looked at us at once. One of them was my best friend and his girlfriend, who noticed us and waved at us.

“Good morning, Yuya. We’re in the same class again, aren’t we?”

“Good morning, Shinji. Good to see you again this year.”

We greeted each other as usual and I took a seat behind Shinji. While it was the same lineup as last year, it was quite a relief.

“Good morning, Yoshi! Did your meotoppuru niveau power up after the break? I thought I was going to get diabetes just looking at you!”

Otsuki-san, who was sitting next to Shinji, spoke to me with a goofy smile and tapped me on the shoulder with a bash. I’m not sure if it was because I’m weak or because I didn’t know how to take it easy, but it hurt.

“Good morning, Akiho-chan. Yuya-kun looks like he’s in a lot of pain, so please try to treat him in moderation, okay?”

Kaede smiled at Otsuki-san as she placed her luggage on the seat to the left of me, as if this was normal.

“Good morning, Kaede-chan! I didn’t think it was possible for all five of us to be in the same class, isn’t this a miracle!”

“—I would have preferred another class if I could, but I guess that’s just the way it is. I look forward to working with you for the next year, Yoshizumi.”



It was Nikaido who came up to us, saying. She must have gone to the restroom or something and was just coming back. She took a seat right next to me as if it was natural.

“I really wanted to sit far away from you, but Otsuki-san called me. I’ll just sit here. But since the one to your left is a special seat for Hitotsuba-san, I’ll just stick with this one.”

“? How come the one to the left of me is a special seat?”

“Eh, you don’t know that? Because if you sit on the left—”

“STOOOOPP!! No more of that, Nikaido-san! Yuya-kun, don’t worry about it! It’s all fine!”

I’m rather curious about it because I have already been told halfway through. I really would like to know, because I was sure there was a good reason for Kaede’s blushing and panicked attempt at stopping me, but she wouldn’t tell me because she’s crossing her fingers in front of her mouth and making an X mark.

“It’s okay, Yoshizumi. I’m sure you’ll find out why soon enough. I can’t wait to see how you’ll react when you do.”

Nikaido had a grinning expression on her face, as if she could peer into the future. Kaede sat in her seat and plopped down on her desk. Shinji and Ootsuki-san shrugged their shoulders as if to say, ‘Good grief’. I feel like I’m the only one left behind. I mean, does Shinji even know?

“Me? Of course I know, but? I rather wonder why Yuya doesn’t know, you know?”

“No, Shin-kun. You can’t talk like that. Yoshi is quite insensitive in that regard. Have you already forgotten what happened on the bus at the extracurricular camp?”

I feel like Shinji made fun of me, but I’m more concerned about what Otsuki-san said! What the heck was going on in the bus during the extracurricular

camp? What the h\*\*l were you all doing?

“Oh... Yoshi. Sometimes it’s better to keep things a secret, you know. Yeah, I mean, you didn’t hear what I just said.”

Can I!? Hey, Shinji! Don’t try to cover it up by smiling bitterly and scrunching your cheeks! Look at me and tell me everything!

“Ahaha... I don’t think I can tell you, no matter how much Yuya asks. Ahahahaha...”

All right, then, it’s war. I’ll do whatever it takes to get him to talk, so be prepared. For starters, I’ll attack Shinji’s weak point, his armpit. I’ll enjoy the h\*\*l out of it!

Just as I leaned forward to put my interrogation strategy into action, the classroom door opened and the homeroom teacher came in. He was small in stature, but muscular and strong. The teacher was also in charge of physical education, his name was Fujimoto Takashi. He must have been the advisor of the track and field team, the only athletic club at Meiwadai High School that regularly competes in national championships. He was a student-oriented teacher with a good reputation.

“I’m Fujimoto, and I’ll be your homeroom teacher for one year from today. It’s nice to meet you. I’m sorry to be so quick, but I’m going to have to ask you to do a brief introduction. I know we’ve met in class already, but I’d like to get to know you better.”

The students said, ‘Yes!’ This was the usual response to the homeroom teacher’s request for self-introduction. And the order was usually in the order of the list of names, but today it was not so easy because everyone was sitting where they wanted. So what was the criteria for selection?

“Right... okay! Let’s start with Yoshizumi-kun, whose eyes just met mine!”

“—Okay.”

I see. I hurriedly looked away, thinking that would happen, but it seems that

he knew exactly what I was doing. I let out a sigh and slowly stood up. Then Kaede, who had recovered before I knew it, called out to me in a whisper.

“Good luck, Yuya-kun.”

I opened my mouth, encouraged by Kaede’s cheering, clenching her fists and saying, “Fight!

“Well... I’m Yoshizumi Yuya. I am a member of the soccer club. I’m addicted to cooking these days. I look forward to working with you for one year.”

When I finished, I bowed and received a round of applause. Phew. I think I did my job well as the first presenter even though I’ve just said the bare minimum. I was about to sit down, feeling relieved that I was able to finish without a hitch, but then an unexpected bomb went off. The source of the bomb was a female student. I didn’t know her name yet.

“Yes, yes! Here’s a question! To be frank, please tell me how you and Hitotsuba-san got to know each other!”

At that moment. The temperature in the classroom rose sharply. No, why do I have to talk about it here? If it was a wedding like reporters ask celebrities, it would have been fine, but this is just a self-introduction, right? See, everyone’s eyes are now drawn to me because you said something strange.

“Let’s not get into personal questions like that. There are things people don’t want to talk about, things they want to keep between them. Yoshizumi-kun, you can sit down. So, the next one in front of you... will it be Higure-kun? Nice to meet you!”

Fujimoto-sensei’s words dissipated the strange atmosphere, but the girl who asked the question seemed unhappy with her mouth wrinkled. I didn’t really want to be bothered by that kind of person. They were definitely troublesome.

After that, the self-introductions of the entire class were completed without any outstanding questions being asked. How was Kaede? She declared that

her favorite thing to do was to be with Yuya-kun. I heard cheers from the girls and whispers of curses from the boys.

“Really, you’re flirting in the open. It’s... refreshing.”

Nikaido’s icy dismay in the seat next to me pierced my heart the most. It’s not my fault, right?

## Chapter 109 They're still a couple

School was over before noon, and we decided to have lunch somewhere and go home. There were no club activities today, so Shinji and I were both free. As we were thinking that it would not be bad to have fun after a long time, Nikaido, who was sitting next to me, left her seat alone.

“I’m sorry, but I’ll pass. I don’t want to walk around with such a large pack.”

Nikaido’s feelings were painfully obvious. After all, a year’s worth of textbooks had been handed out in bulk. I also didn’t want to take a detour with all of this on my back.

“You don’t have to take everything home with you, do you? The teacher said you could leave it behind, right?”

“... Haa. This simpleton.”

Nikaido grabbed my tie and pulled me close to her, cursing in a whisper that only I could hear. So close! Close to my face! No matter how much I have my heart set on Kaede, I’d be thrilled to have a beautiful woman like Nikaido sticking close to me! You’re wearing perfume and you smell good too... So don’t!

“There’s no way I can go out to eat with two hardcore couples! You should have guessed that, you baka!”

“All right. All right, Nikaido! Your face is so close! Please, get away from me!”

“... I’m sorry.”

When I let out a half scream, Nikaido finally distanced himself from me. But

at that moment, a gaze like the fires of h\*\*l pierced my back. I slowly turned around like a broken mechanical doll, and sure enough, Kaede was glaring up at me with her cheeks puffed out to their fullest.

“Ugh...Yuya-kun’s a baka...”

“I’m sorry for this, Hitotsuba. But Yoshizumi is all about you, so it’s okay. And I guess I don’t have to tell you that.”

Before I could even open my mouth, Nikaido gave me a mysterious helpful aid. It was true that I have always been devoted to Kaede, so no matter how much Nikaido, a beautiful girl, who was no less beautiful than Kaede, I would never give up on my devotion. I even made a vow to myself that I’m not going to waver on that.

“...Yoshizumi, you’ll buy me dessert next time, right?”

“Just why!? You’re suddenly being too unreasonable, Nikaido.”

“Because of everything. Punishment for hurting a maiden’s feelings, maybe? Well, I’ll leave first then, and you can all enjoy the rest.”

Nikaido left the classroom with the same light manner as usual, despite the heavy bag of textbooks she was carrying on her shoulder.

“... Yuya-kun. Please buy me a dessert as well.”

“Ka-Kaede?”

“I won’t move here until Yuya-kun promises to make me eat a jumbo parfait from the coffee shop [Elitage] in front of the station by feeding me.”

Kaede crossed her arms and turned away with a pout. Her request for a jumbo parfait at the coffee shop in front of the station, Elitage, was said to be an Everest-level difficulty due to its sheer size of the dish. Ordering the item itself was known as a kind of punishment game in our Meiwadai High School, and no one had yet to finish it.

But it’s okay to ask for it. I’ll agree to buy you a drink if I have to. But you

can't make me feed you! I don't mind if it's just me and Kaede. But I don't want to do it in front of Shinji and Otsuki-san! I don't know what they'll say!

"Great! Then I'll be the one to capture Kaede and Yoshi's lovey-dovey scene on video!"

"That's Akiho-chan for you! Well then, as a thank you, I'll take a picture of Akiho-chan and Higurashi-kun flirting!"

Shinji laughed at Otsuki-san's unnecessary comment, but when Kaede-san unexpectedly suggested it, he cried out like a crushed frog. Hahahaha! It was not like you can just sit back and watch the world go by!

"Shin-kun. What's with that, that reaction you just got? Does that mean you don't want to be in love with me? Is that what it is?"

"No, no... that's not the problem, okay? It's just that in front of Yuya's presence, it's a little, no, a lot embarrassing, or something... Aren't you embarrassed, Akiho!?"

"Me? That's a little embarrassing, but more than that, I want Shin-kun to give me an 'Ahh'! I was looking at Kaede and Yoshi, and I got jealous!"

Shinji, who was usually a calm observer, was now panicking when he saw how frustrated Otsuki-san had become. It had been almost a year since they started dating, but this was the first time they were in a situation like this. I patted my best friend on the shoulder.

"Give it up, Shinji. We don't have any other choice but to promise to feed them."

"... That's too courageous. Are you okay with that? Don't you feel like dying of embarrassment?"

"I'll be fine. As long as I can see Kaede's smile, that's all that matters..."

Yes. There is no doubt that Kaede with her pouty face is cute, but nothing beats her smile. It was a small price to pay if all I had to do was put up with a little embarrassment and she gave me a great smile. Well, they say the key to

anything was to give in. [TL: Not philosophical advice.]

“I see...yeah, you’re right. I wouldn’t mind trading it for a smile from Akiho.”

It was not clear whether he had given up or made up his mind, but Shinji exhaled strongly and then confronted Otsuki-san.

“Okay, Akiho. I’m going to feed you then, until you tell me to stop.”

“Shin-kun...! Yeah, thanks! Ehehe...I’m looking forward to it. Let’s get moving on!”

Otsuki-san smiled like a cherry blossom in full bloom, bound onto Shinji’s arm and pulled him tightly. What was with all the talk about us being a meotoppuru, aren’t they’re a lovely couple too? I guess so.

“Hey, hey, Yuya-kun. I still haven’t heard the answer to my question, have I?”

Kaede asks again, grabbing my sleeve with her chopsticks. Well, I didn’t say it right.

“Of course, I’ll do everything you want me to do, Kaede. I’ll buy you a jumbo parfait and I’ll even feed you.”

“As expected of Yuya-kun! Let’s go then, let’s go right now! The jumbo parfait is waiting for us!”

Like Shinji, I was led by Kaede’s hand to run away from the classroom as if I were the wind. I heard a chorus of sighs from inside the classroom, a mixture of emotions, but I decided not to worry about it.



# Chapter 110 Hidden Pictures and Two Shots

The coffee shop “Elitage” had been in business for over 20 years, run by a couple, and was a place of relaxation for the students of Meiwadai High School. The menu included traditional Neapolitan, pizza toast, curry with pork cutlet and Hamburg steak, which was perfect for hungry students. And the prices were reasonable. I had only been there once or twice due to family reasons, but I remembered it being very delicious.

“Welcome! Oh, it’s you, Yoshizumi! Long time no see! I’ve heard a lot about you, haven’t I? You’re lucky to have the best girlfriend in Japan.”

As soon as I entered the store, I was approached by the owner’s wife, the eternal signature girl of this coffee shop. Her name was Oyama Motoko. She was probably in her fifties, but she looked so young that her age was indeterminate.

“Ahahaha...you’re as quirky as ever. Where did you hear that story from?”

With a wry smile, I sat down at the table I was shown. The amazing thing about Motoko-san was that she remembered the names and faces of all the regular customers, including us students. And she had a h\*ll of an ear for information. Who told you that I’m dating Kaede?

“It’s been a while, Motoko-san. Thank you for taking care of me on that occasion. I’ve come to eat that thing today!”

“Oh, Kaede! Long time no see! It’s nice to see your first love come true. You came here to eat that thing, didn’t you? If that’s the case, I’ll be serving you today to celebrate!”

Kaede bowed with a smile and said, ‘Thank you very much’. Then we each placed our orders. Seriously, Kaede seemed to be planning to eat a jumbo parfait. This is insane.

Well, that was beside the point. I knew who the source of the information was, judging from Kaede’s and Oyama-san’s conversation. While I was impressed, Otsuki-san who was sitting in front of me also crossed her arms and looked deeply moved. What’s wrong?

“Well... I just thought I’d miss it. I remembered how Kaede-chan had brought me here. The only thing we talked about was Yoshi. Well... that was a really tough time for me.”

“A-Akiho-chan! You can’t talk about that! It’s NG!”

Kaede hurriedly leaned forward to stop Otsuki-san, but the more desperate she looked, the more I couldn’t help but become curious. So I hugged Kaede from behind and covered her mouth and looked at Otsuki-san. Now, tell me. What did you talk about here?

“Kaede-chan was a maiden in love back then. She’d bring me here every chance she got and tell me all about Yoshi. She would always talk about how cool he was.”

Hee. So that was what happened. I wonder what kind of face she had and what kind of story she was talking about back then. Kaede, please don’t flail about dangerously.

“Your mouth is open, Yoshi! Yoshi! Did you know? I even had to ask Shin-kun to take a picture of you.”

“Oh, by the way, that did happen. I didn’t know what I was going to use it for when Akiho suddenly asked me to take a picture of Yoshi. I didn’t know what I was going to use it for, but I guess she gave it to Hitotsuba-san.”

If you ask me, I’ve had my picture taken by Shinji many times. He even took a picture of me changing my clothes after gym class in the summer. Could it be that the photos were being sold? I was so shocked that I loosened my hold

on her, and Kaede shook off my restraints, leaned forward and grabbed Otsuki-san's shoulders.

“Akiho-chan! You promised you wouldn't tell anyone about it! What's more, you can't talk about it in front of Yuya-kun!”

Kaede's face turned red and she protested furiously, but Otsuki-san just smirked. No matter how much she fussed about it, it was too late. Kaede gave up early and put her face on my shoulder and shed tears. I'll give you a pat on the head, but I need to make sure of that one thing.

“Hey, Kaede. Can you please delete the picture of me changing clothes?”

It was too embarrassing indeed.

“... Eh!? T-that's... that's just not right! Yuya's well-trained, beautiful body! It's truly a miraculous moment, capturing the moment when he's exasperatedly brushing his sweat-soaked bangs! I can't remove it!”

When she looked up, Kaede suddenly looked up and gave a powerful speech. To be honest, I was a little intimidated.

“It's one of those pictures that I was wondering if I should make it my phone's home screen for a while! I was reluctant to do so because Akiho-chan told me it was a bad idea, but... anyway, it's one of my favorites! No matter how much Yuya-kun asks, I refuse!”

Finally, she finished her powerful declaration with her arms crossed and chest out. I didn't know, it made me kind of happy when she said that much, but that was a picture of me when we didn't know each other yet. Then it was time for an update.

“What does that mean, Yuya-kun?”

“I was just wondering if we could take a two-shot photo.”

Well, this was embarrassing enough, but it had to be good enough to be the home screen of Kaede's phone. And it was also true that we didn't have any pictures of the two of us together. It wouldn't be a bad idea to keep it as a

memory, what do you think?

“Yes, by all means! If you want, let’s take a quick shot here and now, today! Let’s do that!”

Stepping the tension to full throttle in an instant, Kaede took out her phone from her bag and activated the camera. She hugs my arm and pulls my face close to hers. And then—

“Yes, cheese!”

I reflexively made a smile and peace. With that, the shutter clicked and the picture was taken. Kaede’s expression twisted into a sly grin as she checked the image. When Otsuki-san checked the image, she frowned in contrast. Why?

“I can’t help it! What’s with the happy smiles on both of your faces! I forgot to dive deep into it, but don’t make out in front of us like you do alone!”

Otsuki-san cried out to Shinji with a wailing voice. The way he comforted her while smiling and laughing seemed to be lovey-dovey enough, right?

“Ara ara. Fufu. Kaede-chan, I’m glad you found happiness. Maybe you’ll end up getting married soon.”

Oyama-san came back to the table with our orders. First, Shinji and I ordered the hamburger steak for lunch. Ootsuki-san ordered the pancake set. The parfait that Kaede had requested was brought in last, and everything was ready.

“Bon appét\*t!”

With a big smile on her face, Kaede began to eat the parfait, which made my stomach churn just by looking at it. I was satisfied if I could see Kaede’s happy smile as she chewed on the ice cream.

By the way, the price of this jumbo parfait that I offered to buy Kaede was 3000 yen. [TL: ~23€/28\$.] That’s scary.

# Chapter 111 Kaede gets sick to her stomach

“Uuh... Yuya-kun...please help me... ugh...”

Kaede was lying on the side of the bed, holding her mouth with a sickly expression on her face. As I rubbed her back, I chuckled to myself.

After finishing our meal at the coffee shop “Elitage”. We still had time to spare, so we decided to go to karaoke. However, Kaede, who had eaten all of the jumbo parfait by herself, developed a stomach ache as expected. She felt so sick that she couldn’t move for a while, so unfortunately we had to call it a day.

“I didn’t think I would get a stomach ache just from eating a jumbo parfait... uuh... I couldn’t eat anything for my dinner today... ”

“No, wasn’t there also the melon float you had afterwards?”

Kaede looked satisfied after finishing the jumbo parfait with a smile on her face, but she insisted on eating more ice cream from the melon float I ordered. It was so cute to see her opening her mouth to ask for more, that I couldn’t resist giving it to her. Of course, Otsuki-san and Shinji took pictures and video of the scene.

“Here, I’ve brought you some medicine and water, so drink it. Lie down under the covers quietly until you feel fine again.”

“Thank you. And... sorry to bother you. ”

I smiled and gently caressed Kaede as she apologized in a sullen voice. Kaede’s eyes widened in surprise, but she soon became embarrassed and her

cheeks turned red.

“It’s okay. I don’t think you’re bothering me in the slightest. In fact, I’m rather happy to be able to nurse Kaede, you know?”

I mean, it wasn’t a cold, it was just an upset stomach from eating too many sweets, which was kind of funny.

“It’s great that you’re taking care of me, but is it just my imagination or do I feel like you’re making fun of me?”

“...Yeah, it’s just your imagination. On another note, no matter how lethargic you are, it’s not good to not eat anything, so I’ll go make some soup. How about a pot-au-feu with lots of vegetables? Yeah, let’s do that. I’m gonna go make you something. Just wait for me. ”

I patted her one final time and then stood up. I’m sure there were enough ingredients left in the fridge. I should hurry up and make it for her to calm down her stomach, which was surely surprised by the large amount of sweet and cold food she had consumed in such a short time.

“Ah...wait, Yuya-kun. But first, I need a favor... ”

Kaede grabbed me by the hem of my shirt as I tried to sit up. If you’ll just rest then, I’ll make it happen if I can, so what is it?

“I can get into my futon and rest, but if I have my uniform on, my skirt will get wrinkled, and more importantly, it’s hard to sleep. So, you see...”

I see. It’s true that resting on the futon in your uniform was hard because your body feels uncomfortable then. You want to change into your pajamas, right? If that’s the case, I’d better get out of here as soon as possible or she would be too embarrassed to change.

“I’d rather have Yuya-kun help me change my clothes, or rather change my clothes for me...”

When Kaede stuck out her tongue and smiled, I couldn’t help but feel giddy. The reason for this was because her tongue sticking out with the smile was so

cute, and also because the content of her request was beyond my expectations.

“Eh, Yuya-kun. Can you help me get dressed? Or is this too much to ask?”

“N-no. It’s no good... not. Yes.”

I realized that I had unconsciously said yes, and I regretted it and held my head in my hands. No, it should be fine. Kaede and I have already taken a bath together, right? And we are in love with each other. What does it matter now? It’s nothing, right; but... I’ve never had to take off her clothes before! If anything, I’m even more nervous than usual!

“Hehe. Thank you, Yuya-kun. Well then, let’s get started... please.”

I should have refused. But when she looked up at me with her eyes watering, the only answer I could give her was yes, or of course.

It’s time to get ready and start changing.

# Chapter 112 Changing Time Socks Skirt

I swallowed my spit as Kaede sat on the bed in front of me. In order to get her to rest quietly, I had to change her dress from her uniform to pajamas. In games it was all done with the touch of a button, but in real life, of course it was not so easy.

“Yuya-kun... please hurry...”

Kaede’s cheeks turned red and she pleaded to me in a pitiful voice. The way she wriggled her outstretched legs made her look kind of seductive. Yes, if I were to keep quiet and do nothing, my rationality would evaporate. I made up my mind and got to work.

“Okay, well... let’s get started.”

After declaring in a trembling voice, I put my hands on the high socks at her feet. I was tempted to massage her moderately thick thighs, but I held back my desire and slowly pulled them down, revealing her beautiful legs which were like fresh snow. It was always beautiful to see.

“Yu-Yuya-kun... from the look of your eyes, you are thinking of something dirty...”

Kaede said shyly while holding her mouth. It was the first time I had ever made someone I love change their clothes, you can’t really blame me! Also, the moment I took off her socks, Kaede made a weird “ahn~” sound, which felt so wrong!

“I’m sure Kaede would understand if you were in my position. You would



also be more nervous than you think, you know?”

I took a deep breath to calm down my arousal, and then moved on to the next part. Before starting on the next part, I asked Kaede to get into the futon with just her legs. There was one reason for that. Because what I was about to embark on was the skirt.

“Eh... you don’t have to put my legs all the way under the covers just to take off my skirt!”

But I’d be ashamed if you didn’t! If I take off her skirt, that means I would undress Kaede and she would be in her underwear, right? The slender legs like fresh snow and the thighs that make me want to rub my cheeks were enough to evaporate all of my rationality from my mind, and if you also show me her underwear...

“I won’t be able to take care of you then, so please do...”

I said, feeling the heat on my cheeks. But Kaede smiled when she saw me. That’s not good, that’s the face she makes when she comes up with something stupid.

“I see...if Yuya-kun sees me in my underwear, he won’t be able to nurse me. Fufu, then... ”

I heard the sound of rustling and scraping of clothes from under the covers. By the time I realized what she was doing, Kaede had her freshly removed skirt in her hands. Then she pulled her legs out of the covers I had pulled over her.

“Fufu. This saves Yuya-kun the hassle.”

Kaede’s head tilted back and she smiled bewitchingly. I gulped down a mouthful as I looked at her beautiful, bare legs without a single blemish. And today’s underwear was her favorite red. It was pretty with flowery lace on it, wasn’t it? Wait, no!

“Please let me put on my pajamas as soon as possible... I’m not without

embarrassment, you know?”

No, if that’s the case, why did you take your legs out of the futon!? Normally, I would have made some kind of comment, but I didn’t have time for that now. I climbed onto the bed with a foggy head, wobbling closer to Kaede.

I lightly lifted her legs, which were moderately elastic and silky to touch from daily training and care, and put on her pajama pants. I was so nervous that I forgot to breathe, and with trembling hands I managed to get them on safely. By the time I finished my task, I was out of breath and my heart was beating faster than ever.

“Thank you, Yuya-kun. Okay, now... let’s go this way. ”

With a shuffle, she untied the ribbon on her chest and undid the first button. It was only a slight movement, but it was so s\*\*y that I was thrilled. My heart became even more excited.

“As you know, I’m a person who doesn’t wear it to bed, so please help me with that, too?”

I don’t want to be asked to take that off at all, you know!? I mean, Kaede, you’re definitely enjoying watching my reaction!

“That’s not true, you know? I just want Yuya-kun to help me change.”

Then what was with that whistling!? Damn it, you played with my innocence! Then I’ll fight back from here!

# Chapter 113 Changing Time Shirt

Kaede threw away the ribbon she had removed herself. Only the first button was left open, but the collarbone peeking through the small gap emanated with an indescribable eroticism.

“Eh, Yuya-kun. Please help me take off my clothes, as – soon – as – possible.”

She urged me in a cat-like voice, but I could tell by her mouth that she was struggling to hold back her laughter. She was definitely enjoying my panic. But you know what, Kaede? That’s a bad move. I’ll show you what’s called being defeated by your own tricks.

“All right, Kaede. Will you turn around then?”

“Eh? You want me to turn around? Can’t we just face each other?”

“No, no. Come on, turn around. Otherwise, I won’t let you take it off, okay?”

Reluctantly, Kaede turned her back on me. Muhehe. My heart has been pounding like crazy. But I’ll have to pay you back for that! Thinking deeply, I gently wrapped Kaede around me from behind and hugged her gently.

“—!? Yu-Yuya-kun! What are you doing all of a sudden!?”

As expected, Kaede’s face turned red and she was surprised. She wriggled her body as if she wanted to get out, but I held her a little tighter and didn’t let her go. I put my chin on Kaede’s shoulder and whisper softly in her ear.

“Don’t move. Just be quiet.”

“Y-yes... okay... ”

She said as I blew my breath, and Kaede turned over in embarrassment. Muhehe. But my counterattack had only just begun. If you didn't intend to make me more nervous, I wouldn't have to punish you!

“Okay, I’m going to unbutton it.”

“O-oh, wait— hyau!? What are you doing!? No... not my ears...”

I sweetly bit her plump earlobe which was puffed up by my surprise. Kaede wiggled adorably in tickle and unspeakable pleasure. I know that her ears were her weak point. After licking the back of her ear, I slowly unbuttoned the shirt, starting from the top and working my way down.

“Yu-Yuya-kun... my ears... um... no... you can’t... ”

Kaede’s voice began to take on a lustrous tone, but it was too late to worry about it. She reacted in a foully and cute way that made me want to tease her even more, but I used all my mentality to hold myself back. When I unbuttoned her shirt, her red lacy bra revealed her b\*\*\*\*\*s.

“Haa... Haa... nng... Yuuyyaa-kun...”

Kaede stared at me with feverish breath and moist eyes. The body I was hugging was also on fire. I removed my mouth from her earlobe and took off her shirt to reveal her bra completely. My own personal goddess, more beautiful than any goddess from any mythology.

“I’ll take off your bra, too.”

“... Hee?”

Kaede raised her voice in dismay. But it was too late. I unhooked her bra with both hands and gently removed her crimson bra, releasing the enchanting b\*\*\*\*\*s from their restraints. The twin mounds jiggled so loudly that you could almost hear the onomatopoeia. [TL: Aka. sfx.] Oh, how beautiful they are. I want to taste them just like this.

The demon in me whispered, but it was eradicated in an instant. In the first place, I started this as a nurse to put Kaede to sleep who was not feeling well.

If that's the case, then I have to be rational and help her change her clothes. Don't worry. I don't think anyone will get what I'm thinking about, but I don't know what I'm talking about either.

"Kaede, please raise your arms. If you don't, I won't be able to put the top on, you know?"

"... Yes. "

Kaede, who had become as quiet as a stray cat, honestly raised her hands as she replied in a thin voice. I took a deep breath and then put her pajamas on. I put on her sleeves, and as I fumbled down the hem, Kaede's head popped out of the collar. Hehe. I guess that's mission accomplished.

"Yes, the change of clothes is now finished. Please get under the covers and go to sleep quietly."

"...I can't. I can't sleep. There's no way I can sleep!"

I changed her into her pajamas, but Kaede seemed to be unhappy. Well, I was made to be nervous, so I returned it back, but now I was regretting; that I should have held back at least twice as much as I did, but that was all Kaede's fault for reacting in a cute way.

"—Ah!? Are you saying it's my fault!? Isn't that unreasonable!? It's wrong for Yuya-kun to gently lick my ears! Can I lick Yuya-kun's ears too? Isn't that fine? No, I don't need an answer!"

Whoa! Kaede dived at me with a shout like a hero appearing. Her b\*\*\*\*\*s were jiggling so much that I couldn't help but notice them, but I quickly got off the bed to avoid her attack. Kaede, who ended up being unsuccessful just collapsed onto the bed, puffed up your cheeks like a puffer fish and looked at me in silent protest.

"You can't make such a face. You need to rest."

"That's not fair! Yuya-kun, let me replenish my Yuya-kun fill! Please let me nibble, nibble!"

Hey, stop flapping your feet on the bed! Sigh, my first priority is Kaede's health, you know. So, I'll have to put up with that too.

"I understand. If Kaede can be a good girl, you can do whatever you want tonight. I'll let Kaede do whatever she wants, whether it's nibble nibble or bite bite. [TL: I tried my best translating that, okay?] So for now, just rest. Please."

Kaede's cheeks deflated like a balloon as I patted her on the head, and she hurriedly put on the bed sheets and lied down quietly.

"Hehe. I'll go make you some soup, and you can rest until then."

"...Yes. Thank you, Yuya-kun. Oh, and..."

Kaede called out to me to stop me from leaving the bedroom. As I stopped to wonder what was going on, Kaede dropped a bombshell.

"—I won't let you sleep tonight, so be prepared for that!"

No, that's very tempting and I'd love to have you do that, but I have school tomorrow and I need to sleep, okay?

# Chapter 114 Hickey Concealment Operation

The next morning.

As declared, I was made to be Kaede's lapdog for about an hour before bedtime, but I was able to go to sleep safely. It was a happy time, but Kaede went out of control, sucking on my neck and putting a hickey on me.

"I'm sorry, Yuya-kun. I was having too much fun and got carried away."

Kaede was depressed. If she were a puppy, her tail would be slackened, but it was not something to worry about that much.

"Haha. Well, it's okay. If I button up my shirt properly, no one can see it. Well, if this season were summer, we'd be in trouble..."

I took one last look in the mirror before I changed into my uniform and left the house, but as long as I buttoned up the first button properly, I would probably be fine. It was a good thing that the hickey was at the base of my neck. However, I usually didn't close the top button and tended to wear my tie loosely, so it might seem unnatural if I suddenly wore it tightly.

"Uuh... I'll turn myself in gracefully then. When I was trying to get back at Yuya-kun for nibbling on my ear, I went out of control and put a hickey on you. So Yuya-kun, please don't say anything bad about it, because I'm asking for mercy."

"Yeah, I think I could win the case if Kaede-san doesn't say anything!"

In fact, the more Kaede-san spoke as a witness, the more I would lose the case, and without fail, the more the boys in my class would look at me with

murderous intent. For the sake of my peace of mind, please, don't say anything unnecessary, okay?

“Well... I don't mind being hickeyed by Kaede, or rather, I'm happy about it, you know? If you wanted to, I could give Kaede a hickey too.”

I want to mark Kaede's neck with love and let everyone around me know that I'll never give her to anyone else. It's like I'm so possessive that I can't stop thinking about it.

“But if I'm going to do that, it has to be on a weekend. As expected, it would be bad in many ways to wear a hickey when we have school the next day, right?”

“Yes. I've learned a lot from this incident. If I'm going to wear a hickey, it's better to put it on my collarbone instead of my neck. That way, you'll never be found out, right!”

“... That's not what I meant... ”

Kaede clenched her fist. Was it even possible to get a hickey on your collarbone? That aside, Kaede's collarbone. It was like a beautiful white decollete line. I'm going to carve a mark that shows 'my Kaede' there?

“Fufu. Well then, I guess you'll have to kiss my collarbone tonight. Let's get going!”

As usual, I held Kaede's hand and we headed to school.

Today was also the first day of school for the new students after the entrance ceremony. We might be able to meet Miyamoto-san's daughter, Yui-san. Kaede said she loved her, so I hope she doesn't see me as hostile.

“Don't worry about that! I'll explain exactly to her what's going on!”

I'm sorry, Kaede. I'm rather worried when I heard that.



# Chapter 115 Miyamoto-san's Family Yui

As I walked hand in hand with Kaede from the nearest station to the school, I felt stared more than usual. The reason for this was the new students who started coming to school today.

They were all stopping to admire Kaede, who had been voted as the cutest high school girl in Japan. It was a relief that they didn't have the same hatred and murderous intent towards me as the current students, and hopefully that would always be the case.

“...”

“What's wrong, Kaede? You're scurrying around; are you looking for someone?”

Kaede next to me was busily moving her gaze as if she was on the lookout for something. It's not like she's the hero of a spy movie being chased by an invisible enemy.

“No, it's not like that. I'm just signaling my own warning that ‘I won't be giving Yuya-kun to anyone’.”

“... Okay?”

I couldn't help but ask back in a stupid voice. I don't know why you would have such an idea in this situation, because I should be the one to say that line since everyone's gazes were focused on Kaede, not me.

“Yuya-kun, as I told you before, you should be more aware of your own attractiveness! Because the proof of that is that the new girls' eyes are on

you, Yuya-kun.”

Kaede said, looking up at me as she snuggled her arms around me. No, no, no, the freshmen girls were looking at me? Hahaha, that’s ridiculous. Even if they were, doesn’t it rather mean ‘who’s that guy next to Kaede?’

“There is a difference. I can tell. Those eyes have the same look as mine. And I can hear it. ‘Wow... that guy is so cool...’ That’s what the girls’ hearts are saying!”

Kaede warningly looked around her like a wary cat. Unfortunately, I couldn’t hear the voices in the minds of the new students on the street, so I couldn’t quite grasp what Kaede was saying.

“I am sure it will be very difficult with the club activities which start today. There will be a rush of girls looking for Yuya-kun. This is a vexing situation ... ”

Kaede groaned to herself, but would that really happen? Or rather, it would only be a problem if the soccer club that Shinji and I belong to were able to attract girls. Rather, we need any boys (potential players) to come.

“You’ve been showing off since this morning again, Yoshizumi.”

I was tapped on the shoulder with a pop and turned around to see Nikaido with a smile on her face. She looked as refreshing as ever in the morning. However, Nikaido’s appearance caused the surroundings to start buzzing even more. That’s right. When you add Kaede, the cutest high school girl in Japan, and Nikaido, who’s more handsome than the boys, who call her the ‘prince of Meiwadai,’ it’s like something out of a manga. By the way, Nikaido. You greet Kaede with good morning, but not me?

“Hahaha. Don’t be sulky, Yoshizumi. It’s not like that; it’s good that you’re getting along, but it’s poison to the new student’s eyes, you know?”

“Indeed, if I were in the position of a freshman and saw a ridiculously pretty girl senior walking alongside a guy, I’d want to kill him.”

” ... The same can be said from a girl’s point of view... Hitotsuba-san, maybe this guy doesn’t understand?”

“That’s right. As Nikaido-san said, Yuya-kun tends to underestimate himself ... ”

Nikaido smiled bitterly and Kaede sighed, ‘How difficult’. No, so why are we talking about that? Are you two playing a joke on me?

“Good luck, Hitotsuba-san. That said, Yoshizumi is only looking at you, so I don’t think you’ll have any problems.”

‘I’ll see you later then’, Nikaido said, and ran off. The sight of her running back with her bag on her shoulder was nothing short of beautiful. If I took a picture of her and used it to enter in the contest, I could win the first prize, couldn’t I? Of course, the grand prize would go to Kaede’s smile. What a mess!

“Mou... You’re too good to me, Yuya-kun. Besides, my smile is only for Yuya-kun, you know?”

There was an angel there, smiling wryly. If this wasn’t the way to school, I’d hug her right now and nudge her head until she felt better.

“Fufu. Then I guess I’ll have to wait until I get home to enjoy that!”

Well, joking around with Kaede was an everyday occurrence, so it was not something I need to mention again. But it was good to have something to look forward to when you get home since it motivates you to work hard all day.

Just when the school gate finally came into view ...

“—Kaede-nee!”

A female student rushed towards us, calling Kaede’s name with a clear sounding voice. The water droplets in her eyes shone in the morning sunlight. She jumped into Kaede’s chest with all her might.

“At last... Finally we met... ! I thought I’d never see you again!”

A female student shed tears on Kaede’s chest. I think she’s a new student, but the fact that she knows Kaede and was this close to her means that maybe she’s—?

“Mou. You’re still exaggerating, Yui-chan.”

Kaede stroked her cute little sister with a bitter smile. I knew it. So this was Miyamoto-san’s only daughter, Yui, who entered Meiwadai High School.

She looked like a puppy as she rubbed her cheeks against Kaede. Her ponytail was tied in a single knot and swaying like a tail. She was shorter than Kaede, and she looked quite young, but that impression was only because Kaede was already a total goddess, and in comparison, this was normal. She didn’t look like a child by any means.

“Ehehe. It’s been a long time since I had Kaede-nee pet my head, so I’m happy. And your b\*\*\*\*\*s are great, aren’t they? I can’t get enough of them.”

That was not the image I had of her. You’re talking like a drunk middle-aged man, are you okay? And her mouth was quite sloppy. I mean, would you mind switching places with me right now?

“By the way, Kaede-nee. I’ve got something on my mind, if that’s okay?”

“Fine. But first, please stop rubbing your cheek against my chest.”

“Ehehe... sorry, sorry. Because Kaede’s b\*\*\*\*\*s are soft and comfortable.”

Yui let go of Kaede while scratching her head and cleared her throat while making her cheeks slightly red. I can understand why you would want to rub your cheeks. It’s like a top-quality cushion that could ruin a person. Once you’re buried in it, you need a will of steel to get out.

“Then again. Kaede-nee, who is that ikemen-looking guy over there?”

Hey, don’t point at people. Only a certain, great detective is allowed to do that. [TL: I feel like the author is a total fan of Detective Conan.]

# Chapter 116 Kaede is Mine

Kaede poked the new student who called me “ikemen” on the head.

“You can’t point at someone, can you? This extremely cool and handsome man is Yoshizumi Yuya. He’s my boyfriend and my future husband.”

Kaede, I don’t think you should introduce me that way! Also, cool and handsome have the same meaning, so if you’re going to add them, make it one or the other. In fact, don’t use either of them. It’s nice knowing that I’m introduced as your future husband, though.

“And Yuya-kun. As you may have already noticed, this girl is Miyamoto Yui. She’s Miyamoto-san’s only daughter, and she’s like a little sister to me.”

“N-nice to meet you! I’m Miyamoto Yui! I’ve been indebted to Kaede since I was little, and she’s like a real big sister to me!”

Yui hugged Kaede’s arms with a smile that burst out like a cherry blossom in full bloom. But perhaps it was my imagination, because although her expression was smiling, her eyes were not. Rather, I felt something like a murderous intent.

“That’s why Yuya-kun will be like a big brother to you, Yui-chan. Please be good friends with him from now on, okay?”

“I know, Kaede. If he’s Kaede’s future husband, he’s like a step-brother to me, right? I’ll get along with him!”

She stood in front of me and held out her right hand. Was the killing intent I felt a misunderstanding?

“I’m looking forward to working with you from now on, Yoshizumi-senpai!”

“A-ah. Nice to meet you too.”

We exchanged a firm handshake, but I wondered if she hadn't squeezed me too hard. It was a girl's grip. It didn't hurt at all, so I didn't mind. I was thinking about it when Yui's face turned bright red and she clenched her teeth.

“This is a tough one... but I won't lose.”

“... yes?”

“Kaede-nee is my Kaede. I will never give her to you.”

Yui released my hand when she declared so with a small voice that Kaede couldn't hear while glaring at me with killing intent. Then she took Kaede's arm again and made a pouty face. What was with the quick change? You're like a weirdo.

“Ehehe. Now I'm with Kaede-nee everyday! I'm so happy!”

“Hey, hey! Yui-chan, please leave me alone! I want to hold hands with Yuya-kun!”

“That's fine! I want to be close to Kaede-nee too! I need to replenish my dose of Kaede-nee that I couldn't consume at all in middle school!”

I won't ask what 'my dose of Kaede' is. Because I know exactly how you feel. During the extracurricular camp, I was lonely just because I couldn't sleep in the same bed with Kaede for a few days. Once I fell asleep with Kaede wrapped around me, my body couldn't handle it without her. She had that kind of magic power.

“Yu-Yuya-kun! Please help me!”

As Yui pulled Kaede towards her, Kaede extended her free hand towards me, but I didn't dare to offer a helping hand. It had been a long time since they'd seen each other. It would be a mature thing to forgive her for at least for today. Besides, we were sitting next to each other in the classroom.

“Mumumu. What a smug attitude you have. I knew you were tough.”

“Eh? Yui-chan, did you say something!? I mean, please let me go soon! First-year classrooms are on the third floor, right? You’re not on the same floor as us!”

As expected, the gazes of not only the new students but also the current students were becoming more severe. Yui-chan was planning to take Kaede to the classroom with a smile on her face. As expected, that wasn’t good. I took Kaede’s hand and half-heartedly pulled her into my arms, but the momentum was too much and she ended up hugging my chest. Now I’ve done it.

“Mou... You’re so bold, Yuya-kun. Can’t it wait until you get home?”

“No, it’s not like that. I don’t mean that. It’s really embarrassing.”

I tried to let go of Kaede, but she put her arms around my waist and wouldn’t let go. Are you so sad that you had to play Oshikura Manju near the freshmen’s classrooms? [TL: A simple game where people stick to each other, trying to push each other out of a circle while singing ‘Who is crying?'] But I’ve already learned the best way to deal with this situation.

“Ah, well then, Yui. Good luck for the rest of the day. Kaede, let’s go.”

In other words, the best solution for this situation was to walk away even if you had to drag her forcefully. Because it would be a shame to give up Kaede’s soft body and fresh citrus scent. Instead, I’d have to sacrifice my sense of shame, but well, it was too late now.

“Mou... Please be more gentle with me. Oh, well, I’ll see you later, Yuki! Have fun in high school!”

I dragged Kaede, who was waving at Yui, up the stairs to the classroom. It’s nice that we’re stuck together, but can you please start walking on your own feet soon?

“Ehehe. But I refuse!”

I thought Kaede was too cute to spit out the famous line with a smug look on her face, but I cut off the temptation and gave her a hand chop on her head.  
[TL: A Jojo reference.]

“... It’s cute, but no.”

“Tehe. I understand. I’ll walk on my own feet from here on out.”

Although she said that, Kaede didn’t let go of my hand until we reached the classroom. Because of that, Shinji and Otsuki-san, who happened to be on their way to school, teased me a lot in the morning.



# Chapter 117 Meiwadai High School's Annual Spring Event

During Spring, Meiwadai High School was somewhat busy. The first thing was the trial period for new students that would start today. This was a week of war in which all clubs, both athletic and cultural, did everything in their power to secure members and compete for them. If any club was defeated in this battle, it might be shut down, so all clubs were desperate.

The second was a ball game held at the beginning of May. The boys would play soccer, the girls basketball, and this sports festival would be held in a tournament format regardless of grade... It was the second biggest event after the cultural festival and it was held for over two days, so you could see how serious it was.

“Well, I think everyone knows that the main purpose of this ball game tournament is to unite new classes and deepen friendship with new students..., well... I’d like us to aim for first place anyway, but what do you think?”

In the morning HR, our homeroom teacher, Fujimoto-sensei, leaned forward from the teacher’s table and asked us. As expected of a track and field advisor who knew the whole country (class). I didn’t know he wanted to win the ball game as well. By the way, last year, we boys lost our first game against a third-year team that had several seniors on the soccer team. The women’s team lost around the third round, despite Nikaido’s successful plays.

“The boys have Yoshizumi and Higure. And there’s also Motegi from the baseball team, so we have a lot of athletic guys. The girls also have Nikaido and Hitotsuba, the undeniable aces of the basketball team. I think we can aim

for the championship if we plan our strategy well, so what do you think!?”

No, I don't care if you ask me what I think, Sensei. Why are you even more motivated than the students in the first place?

“Yuya-kun, Yuya-kun.”

“Hmm? What, Kaede?”

While I was thinking about why Fujimoto-sensei was so motivated, Kaede, who was sitting to my left, whispered to me as she gently moved her desk closer. What's the matter?

“I want to see you looking cool, Yuya-kun. I'll do my best to support you.”

She whispered in my ear. My motivation switch was swiftly turned on as I was mesmerized by her prodigally angelic smile. If Kaede is cheering me on, I can't help but be super motivated!

” ... Hey, Shinji.”

I lightly kicked the chair of my best friend sitting in front of me. The corner of Shinji's mouth lifted as he looked back at me, apparently also having been told something by his favorite girlfriend. His eyes were burning. Then it was decided.

“Sensei! Let's go for it, for the win! Shinji and I are maxed out on motivation!”

“Oh, oh! Well, Yoshizumi and Higure, you say so! What about the others!?”

Fujimoto-sensei, who was suddenly very excited, blasted the other boys, but they couldn't seem to decide what to do. Even Motegi from the baseball team, who was in the same class as last year, seemed unsure.

“Everyone, let's try our best to win! I'll do my best to cheer you on!”

Kaede's words of support ignited the hearts of the male students. Raising your fist to the sky and shouting, ‘Let's do it!’. They were kind of too simple,

if I do say so myself.

“If we’re going to do this, let’s aim to win the championship for both men and women! Right, Nikaido-san!?”

“Eh, me? Well, I’m going to play, so I want to win, but... Is Hitotsuba-san going to play too?”

“Of course. Since we’re going to play, let’s go all out to win.”

Kaede smiled fearlessly. She seemed to be full of confidence, but will she be alright? Nikaido’s athleticism was honestly outstanding. I was also taken aback when I saw her in gym class.

“Well, I hope Hitotsuba-san will give it her all. This could be a real shot at the championship... Oh, but for that, do you need Yoshizumi’s support?”

Don’t flaunt your fresh prince smile. Everyone’s gonna get a thrill out of it. Aside from that, if Kaede was going to give it her all in the basketball game, I would cheer her on until my voice dies. That’s a given, isn’t it?

“With Yuya-kun’s support, I’m like a hundred-men strong! I’ll even give it 120% and show you that I can win the championship!”

“You’re so dependable. At this rate, I’ll be able to make up for last year. I’ll be counting on you, Yoshizumi.”

“I’ll give you all the support you need. I wish Nikaido good luck too.”

Nikaido was so cool that I couldn’t help but admire the way she played basketball. I couldn’t wait to see what kind of chemical reaction would occur when she and Kaede teamed up and played with all their might.

“... How sly of you.”

” ... Yuya-kun’s a cheater.”

I received a double punch of Kaede’s pouting face and Nikaido’s glazed eyes. Why!? I mean, a cheater!? I don’t think that statement is right, Kaede!

“We’ve got this match. If we win the men’s and women’s championships this year, the Yakiniku meat will be ours!”

As I was pondering this, Fujimoto-sensei was suddenly overcome with emotion as he let out a victory yell. What the h\*\*l’s with you, I was so surprised!?

I later found out that the second year teachers were going to buy the homeroom teacher of the class that won this ball game a plate of grilled meat. He says that was why he fired us up.

“All right... if you win, the teacher will treat everyone to grilled meat. What? Wouldn’t that be nice?”

Is that okay with you? If the teacher treats the whole class to yakiniku, he’ll be the only one who loses. But I guess the teachers were having fun with the ball game, too.

“Fufu. It’s still a little while away, but let’s try our best to win, Yuya-kun!”

“Yeah, I guess so. I can’t lose with Kaede cheering me on, you know. I’ll go for the victory with all my might.”

“I can take a lot of pictures and videos of the cool Yuya-kun... guhehe.”

I might have been premature.

# Chapter 118 The Prince of Meiwadai

“Kaede-nee! It’s lunch time!”

Yui, the energetic and stormy first-year student, barged into our classroom. She was met with a lot of stares from our astonished classmates, but she didn’t show any signs of concern and rushed over to us hugging Kaede’s back as a matter of course. Kaede accepted it with a wry smile.

“Yui-chan. I’m glad you’re here, but don’t you want to eat with your classmates?”

“It’s okay! Today I want to celebrate the reunion with Kaede-nee! There are so many things I want to talk about, so many things I want to ask your handsome boyfriend... Huh?”

Yui was speechless when she saw Nikaido sitting next to me. Nikaido, who had gotten used to this situation over the past year, quickly stood up and walked over to the frozen Yui and said,

“Nice to meet you, I’m Nikaido Ai. I’m a woman, just like you. Hey, what’s your name? What should I call you?”

“Y-yes. My name is Miyamoto Yui. What to call you... uhm, I’ll leave it to you.”

“Fufu. I see. Then how about Yui-chan? Fufu, that’s a cute name.”

Nikaido smiled refreshingly. This was the face of Nikaido’s magical nature that had captivated so many female students. If she were to try to be like a prince in a shoujo manga, they would surely swoon over her. In fact, Yu-chan

was already blushing and fuming.

“Um, um... well... Kaede-nee, help me!”

After panicking, Yui-chan chose to put Kaede in the line of fire. Kaede smiled bitterly and patted her head.

“Ahaha. I’m sorry if I startled you. Sorry, Yui-chan.”

Nikaido apologized, but Yui-chan remained vigilant, hiding behind Kaede’s back. She scratched her head and reflected on whether she had overdone it, which she surely did.

“She’s a junior you’ve never met before, and you’ve stimulated her too much. You’ve got to pull your weight a little, you know? Are you trying to make all the freshmen girls your prisoners?”

“I didn’t mean to, but... Hey, Yoshizumi. Am I that good looking? Don’t I look like a girl?”

Nikaido asked me while putting her hand on my shoulder. I don’t know why she was so unsure about this, but Nikaido was a beautiful girl no matter how you looked at her.

It was a contradiction in terms, as her body was well-trained in basketball without any excess fat, but only her chest armor was solid. She had sharp eyebrows, a coolish-looking face and a rather deep voice, but I think that was rather Nikaido’s charm.

“I see. I see! I’m a beautiful girl then! If Yoshizumi says so, I’m sure he’s right! No – you’re a friend to have!”

“Well, Kaede’s got you beat though! Hey, don’t stick to me! Get off me, Nikaido!”

Nikaido rubbed shoulders with me in a friendly way, as men did with other men. [TL: Jo, what.] I tried to pull her off, but she resisted with some effort and even slapped me on the back. It hurt, but what hurt even more was Kaede’s gaze. She puffed up her cheeks like a balloon and silently protested.

“Don’t stick to him any longer, Nikaido-san!”

But the balloon’s air quickly burst. As I was struggling to get out of my restraints, she forcibly pulled my hand and rescued me, hugging me with all her might. I felt as if I were a stuffed animal.

“I’m sorry, Hitotsuba-san. It’s just a habit I’ve had for a while... I’ll be careful from now on.”

‘Hnggh’ Kaede remained cautious of Nikaido, who laughed at her.

But I want you to let me go. I can’t breathe with my face pressed against Kaede’s chest. I’ll die of asphyxiation while feeling happy if this continues. Help me!

“Fufu. It’s okay, Hitotsuba-san. I’m not going after him. The area next to Yoshizumi belongs only to Hitotsuba-san. But I think it’s time to let him go, you know?”

“No, I don’t want to! I won’t let him go! I’ll definitely make Yuya-kun happy!”

Oh, Kaede’s protest is always so cute. But oh no, my vision is going completely blank.

“No, that’s fine, but... if you keep hugging him like this, Yoshizumi won’t be able to breathe and it’ll be bad, okay?”

” ... Eh? Ahhhh, Yuya-kun! Are you okay!? Are you breathing!?”

Kaede finally noticed my condition and let me go. The air was delicious, but I wanted to be surrounded by that feeling more. I was feeling happy.

“Fufu. Looking at your debaucherous face, you seem to be okay. But that’s beside the point. If we don’t move quickly, our lunch break will be over, what should we do? Do you want to go to the cafeteria now?”

As Nikaido hinted at the time, there was still time remaining for lunch break,

but I'm not sure if there were any spots left in the cafeteria if we went there now. And since Yui-chan was also there today, there were six of us. In addition, there would be a lot of new students there, just like we did last year. When I think about it, it feels hopeless.

"I just got a call from Akiho-chan, and it looks like she's secured seats for six people."

"Really? When did she leave, Otsuki-san?"

"Around the time when Yuya was almost choked when Hitotsuba-san hugged you? She said it was too sweet to bear and left first."

Shinji chuckled and stood up. I'd like to debate whether the atmosphere was sweet or not, but for now, we had to move on. The longer we make her wait, the more Otsuki-san would probably cry out.

"So. I'm going ahead of you, so Yuya and the others should come as soon as possible."

"I know, I know. Kaede, that's why let's go, shall we?"

Shinji left the classroom at a fast pace. Nikaido followed him out, but just before she did, she put a smile on her face and gave me a wink. And with a mouthful of 'I'm sorry'.

So you had done that on purpose to stir up Kaede.

"Yuya-kun and Nikaido-san were communicating with each other eye to eye... ugh... I can do the same with Yuya-kun! I won't lose!"

Kaede was blazing with rivalry. But, I only understood Nikaido because she was moving her mouth. But no matter what I say, I don't think Kaede can hear me right now.

"Um... Yoshizumi-senpai. Are you always like this with Kaede-nee?"

Yui-chan asked with a sneaky earful, as if the person she adored as her sister was someone she didn't know.



“Well... what do you think? Maybe today is more turbulent than any other day? Rather, is she different from the Kaede you know, Yui?”

“Fufufufu. I can’t help it. If you insist, I’ll teach you a lot about Kaede-nee! I’ll have plenty of time to show you my treasured collection!”

“Oh... that’s good! I hope you’ll let me hear about it soon.”

“Of course! Kaede-nee is my Kaede-nee, but Yoshizumi-senpai is also a comrade who is afflicted with Kaede-nee’s charm!”

Apparently, she still harbored a rivalry, but her caution seemed to have diminished. Otherwise, she wouldn’t have brought her face so close to me with an earful.

“Yui-chan, you’re so close to Yuya-kun. What have you two been sneaking around talking about? Please let me hear it.”

In comparison, Kaede, her cheeks puffed up with some tears in her eyes, intervened. I pat her on the head. Don’t worry, I’m only about Kaede. I won’t be dominated by anyone other than Kaede, so don’t worry.

“Ehehe... I’m all about Yuya-kun too. Please pat me more. If you want, we can even hug or kiss!”

“I would do that... when we get home. Let’s move to the cafeteria as soon as possible. We never know what Otsuki-san will say if we keep her waiting.”

I nodded and Kaede squeezed her arm around mine. I was about to walk to the cafeteria, enjoying the feeling of paradise with the soft touch and the fresh smell of citrus, when Yui asked her a perfectly reasonable question.

“Hey, Kaede-nee. Are you by any chance living together with Yoshizumi-senpai?”

# Chapter 119 Yuya's Charm Lecture

“Uu... uu... so Yoshizumi-senpai... had such a past... ugh ...”

Yes, this is Yoshizumi reporting. We were currently chatting in the cafeteria after finishing our lunch. When I answered about the ‘suspicion of cohabitation’ that Yui had about me from earlier, she started to cry.

By the way, I was the one who explained the situation to Yui. The content was a lie that Kaede’s mother came up with, and it was exactly the same as what I told Nikaido when she had questioned me before.

Kaede wanted to talk about it herself, but I did my best to stop her. Why? Because even though the official announcement was that I was living in Kaede’s house, if I let Kaede handle it, she might reveal that it was really only the two of us living together.

“What kind of drama is that when your parents suddenly disappear, leaving you in debt!? Uu... Yoshizumi-senpai, it must have been difficult...” [TL: Oh right, there was that debt thingie going on.]

“Ah, no. Right now, it’s more difficult that Yui-chan is crying so hard, you know?”

The handkerchief Kaede lent her was already soaked with large tears. But it was easier for me to let her emotions explode in an exaggerated way than to receive a strange look at my face, even if it was mixed with a made-up story.

“I’m sorry for you, Yoshizumi-senpai, and no matter how many times I hear it, they’re terrible parents. I can’t believe they were just gone, only leaving behind debts. I wonder what would have happened to you now if it wasn’t for Hitotsuba-san ... ”

“That’s right. You would have probably quit high school and became a pupil of your scary brother by now, right? In fact, that’s what Kaede said to me right before you came.”

Nikaido clutched her head in disbelief as I answered plainly. Shinji and Otsuki were speechless and Yui was shaking like she was scared. Kaede was the only one who was smiling and remembering. What’s wrong?

“I was kind of amused when I remembered the first time I met that brother. Also, he has a surprisingly childlike side which made him a very pleasant person to talk with. It’s no wonder Yuya-kun admired him.”

If you ask me, Kaede, you had a strong attitude when you first met Taka-san. You were also quite harsh with your words. Despite Taka-san mercilessly scaring you.

“What was it again? ‘The fact that you think you can scare me by being so aggressive is... well, what can I say? Oh, excuse me. Comparing you to a single-celled organism would sound rude to the single-celled organism itself. I’m sorry. And that tie is lame.’”

And you said that while smiling, right? It was an unbelievable tongue-in-cheek comment that had left me, and Taka-san, very confused.

“I-I was so desperate at that time! When I thought I had to save Yuya-kun, these words came out on their own!”

Kaede’s gesture of defending herself by waving her hands in the air was so cute that it brought light to the air that had been so heavy and dull. The tears that had been running down Yui’s cheeks had stopped and she seemed to have regained her composure.

“But, but! Whether or not Yoshizumi-senpai is worthy of Kaede-nee is another matter! Yes, I haven’t admitted it yet!”

Yui said forcefully, pointing at me as she clutched the handkerchief she borrowed from Kaede. It was good to see you were back in good spirits, but have you already forgotten that you were just told this morning that you

shouldn't point fingers at people?

“Yui-chan... I told you not to point at Yuya-kun, didn't I? So why are you doing it again?”

“Hee—! I-I'm sorry! I won't do it again, please forgive me, Kaede-nee!”

I think it was just my imagination, but Kaede was smiling, but on her back I could see a Hannya demon holding a dangerous weapon. But Nikaido, Shinji and the others seemed to see it too, and their faces were strained. It must be true that people who rarely got angry were terrifyingly scary when they did.

“Seriously, ... Listen, Yui-chan. Yuya-kun is a very nice person, you know? That's what I'm going to explain to you now, so listen carefully, okay?”

Oh no, that's not good. It's definitely going to be an endless rain of compliments for me from here on out. I made eye contact with Nikaido and the others who sensed the danger as well, and we chose to leave this place. I'm sorry to say that I'll have to sacrifice Yui.

“Hitotsuba-san, I think I'll head back first. I'm sorry to interrupt your reunion after so long.”

“Yeah, yeah! You're right! If we're here any longer, we won't be able to talk about anything else! Shin-kun, let's go back to the classroom too!”

“Yeah, I guess so. You and Yuya should talk and deepen your friendship.”

Hey, Shinji! You're betraying me!? Let me go with you!

“You can't, Yoshizumi. Yui-chan is like Hitotsuba-san's little sister, so you have to make sure you get along with her.”

Nikaido smiled like a mean devil as she said that. What I saw in her eyes was a glint of joy. She must be enjoying imagining me writhing in a living h\*\*l! You heartless b\*\*\*\*\*d!

“It's called destiny, Yoshizumi. Have a good day, then.”

Nikaido put her hand on my shoulder and waved goodbye as she left the cafeteria. Damn it, it's not fair to leave with such a fresh smile. Shinji and Otsuki-san hurriedly followed behind her. Shinji, be ready for me when I come back.

“Fufu. Well then, Yui-chan. For the rest of the time, I'll tell you a lot about Yuya-kun's charm. Let's start with the part where I fell in love with Yuya-kun!”

I sighed and decided to watch Kaede as she began to talk with glee. I felt embarrassed to death, but I was also curious to see what Kaede thought of me. Yui, too, seemed to have made up her mind and leaned forward a little to take up a listening position.

“I still remember it clearly. That was one summer day last year—.”

Kaede's narration continued non-stop until the chime rang, signaling the end of the lunch break. But according to her, it was less than 30% of the total, and she was not satisfied.

“I still have more to say! Yui-chan, please come to my house after school! I'll let you hear the rest of the story!”

“Sorry, Kaede-nee. Let's talk another time. I'm already full for today ... ”

“Why do you say that!? We're just getting to the good part! Talking about the confession from Yuya-kun would be really nice! Don't you want to hear it!?”

“Ugh... give me a break! It's not about Yoshizumi-senpai's charm, it's about Kaede-nee's love story! I'm too embarrassed to know more!”

Yui ran away from the cafeteria while shouting. Kaede looked at her with a puzzled look on her back and said.

“Hey, Yuya-kun. Did she perhaps fall in love with you?”

It was scary how unaware you were of yourself!

# Chapter 120.1 Halloween SS

## Afternoon Party

October 31st. Did you know what this day was? Yes, it was the day when people would say, ‘Give me candy or I’ll play a trick on you,’ commonly known as Halloween.

Well, let us not joke about that. In recent years, Halloween has been recognized as a festival where people dress up in costumes and make noise. Until last year, I also used to watch it on TV at home.

“Pfft... pfft... you look even better than I expected, Yoshi...”

“Don’t laugh, Akiho. But... pfft... Yuya, you’re so... pfft... cute.”

As usual, we decided to have a Halloween party at Otsuki-san’s suggestion and we had to wear costumes. Well, that was it. I’d always wanted to experience dressing up at least once myself.

“I thought that Yoshizumi’s face was pretty, but this might be more than what I imagined... He’s just plain cute now. I mean, aren’t you prettier than me now?”

“I never thought that Yuya-kun and cross-dressing would go so well together... How scary... If I passed him on the street without knowing, I would mistake him for a girl.”

Otsuki-san and Shinji held their mouths and struggled to hold back their laughter, while Nikaido and Kaede were speechless with surprise. How did this happen?

The costume for Halloween was to be decided by lottery. I lost the lottery and

ended up dressing up as a woman. As a result, I was now wearing makeup, a long blonde wig and a dress that Kaede gave to me. Who the h\*\*l prepared this!?

“It’s a shame to keep such a cute little Yoshi all to ourselves! Let’s take a picture and upload it!”

Otsuki-san’s outfit was that of a witch. She was wearing a wide-brimmed black pointy hat and a long hem cloak, and holding a broom in her hand. Whether it was the wrong size of the outfit or just the taste of the person who chose it, the length of the dress wasn’t quite right and her belly button was showing, which combined with her b\*\*\*\*\*s made for an erotic and cute look.

Shinji, the boyfriend of such a legitimate Lolita witch, was dressed as a mummy man with a bandage wrapped around his face. This was a safe disguise. I’m so jealous, damn it.

“Akiho, that’s really not a good idea. We should at least show it to everyone at the beginning of the week.”

I wanted to say that you were a good friend for rejecting Otsuki’s suggestion right away, but after that, I can’t take it! Don’t try to show it to our classmates! Don’t even try to take a picture of me in the first place!

“Hey, Yoshizumi. It’s Halloween, why don’t we at least take a picture to commemorate the occasion? If you don’t want to be photographed by yourself, how about with me?”

Before I could ask what she meant by that, Nikaido smiled wryly, stood next to me, and suddenly put her arm around my waist.

By the way, Nikaido’s outfit was that of a vampire. She already looked like a prince, and now she was dressed as a man. In order to play that role, she wore a pure white shirt and a burgundy vest with her eyes colored red. The sight of her cloak flipped over her black pants was even cooler than usual. However, the buttons of her shirt were unbuttoned to the front of her chest, exposing her skin, and she looked sexier than ever, making it difficult to look at her.

“Ni-Nikaido!? What are you doing—!?”

The scent of citrus hit my nostrils. Healthy skin and a flicker of beautiful jade-colored underwear come into view. I did my best to avert my gaze.

“Quiet, princess. I am a vampire. I’m going to drink your blood now. Don’t worry, it won’t hurt.”

I screamed in my mind. Before I knew it, I was being hugged and Nikaido’s face was right in front of me. She was dressed up as a vampire prince, which added to her prince-like degree.

“Fufu. That’s a good girl. You have a beautiful neck, by the way. It looks so... delicious.”

Wait, wait, wait! What’s going on, Nikaido! Isn’t your tension strange! Your voice is getting all glossy! Stop licking your tongue! Oh no, if I don’t resist, I’ll be eaten for real!

“Aah! Where do you think you’re going? No, don’t try to escape. You’re going to be my... my princess now. I won’t give you to anyone.”

I twisted my body and tried to resist, trying to escape Nikaido’s clutches, but her grip on my waist became stronger, and the sound of her voice in my ear had a magical power that robbed me of my defiance.

“Ni, Nikaido...?”

“Don’t worry. The pain is only momentary. So... let’s eat ... ”

Beautiful white teeth closed in on my neck. It bites. The moment I thought that, the one who saved me was ...

“Stooo——oop! Don’t go any further! Get away from Yuya-kun, Nikaido-san!”

It was Kaede in the form of a wolf girl. I was able to escape from the vampire prince’s clutches as she grabbed my arm and pulled me forcefully towards her.



“Oh, thank you, Kaede. Thanks to you, I’m saved...”

Kaede hugged my arms tightly in her chest. The blissful feeling of the warmth, softness, and elasticity almost made my expression melt.

Kaede’s costume was a wolf girl. She wore an off-the-shoulder top that boldly exposed her skin and a pair of shorts, with the added bonus of a kemomimi and a tail.

Kaede looked so cute and s\*\*y that it was even more difficult to look at her than Nikaido. And then there was also the soft feel of it directly on my arm. Uh oh, she was not wearing one. I won’t say what.

“Sorry, sorry. I was just teasing him because he reacted so innocently. So don’t be so intimidating, okay?”

Kaede’s cheeks puffed out in alarm as Nikaido defended herself with anahaha laugh.

“Nikaido... please don’t do something like that, it’s bad for my heart. I mean, it’s a masquerade, but you’re taking it too seriously...”

“It’s Yoshizumi’s fault, okay? You’re just dressed up as such a cute princess, even your reaction is cute, that’s foul. Even if I don’t eat you, aren’t you going to be eaten by the wolf?”

Hahahaha. That was ridiculous. There was no way Kaede would do such a thing. She was a cute wolf no matter how you looked at it.

“Yuya-kun, it’s trick or treat. If you don’t give me some candy, I’m going to eat you. Gao~”

Kaede was adorable to say the least as she bent the fingers of both hands and thrust them out in front of her. It was as if she was a kitten doing her best to be vain.

“Uu... Yuya-kun’s eyes are only gazing warmly. Listen, Yuya-kun. I’m a wolf now! And Yuya-kun is a princess. If you don’t do what I say, I’ll bite your head off!”

“What is this wolf girl? She’s so cute... Hey, Yoshizumi. Would it be okay if I brought her back? Just for one night! Please. Let me love Ichiyo-san!”

“What are you talking about, Nikaido? Of course you can’t. I’m the only one who can make love to Kaede.”

“W-w-w-what are you two talking about!?”

I know, I know, Nikaido. I really understand the desire to love Kaede. You want to nudge her head and spoil her all night long. I feel the same way. I want to give her a lap pillow and pet her all the time.

“Yuya-kun!? Mou, why are you saying those things at this time!? I’m happy to hear it, but please behave yourself now!”

Kaede yelled with her face turning red, and slammed my chest. That was fine, I usually would rather pet you either way! And she would hug me.

“Hey, Shin-kun. What kind of day is Halloween?”

“Akiho. Halloween was originally a harvest festival, not an event where people would dress up in costumes. And it wasn’t even the kind of event where you would flirt in front of your friends, either.”

“Higure is right. The two of them create a strawberry space whenever they get a chance, which is really... disgusting.”

Before I knew it, Nikaido had moved next to Shinji and the others while staring at us. The last word, ‘disgusting’, had an air of murder in it, but I would like to think it was just my imagination.

“Let’s leave that meotoppuru alone and eat cake! The butler who brought us these costumes? He bought it for us which is in the fridge now!”

“I’ll eat it all while Yoshizumi is flirting with her. I want to eat badly.”

“Ni-Nikaido-san? I hope you’ll at least leave some for us.”

You'd better leave some for us too, right!? Kaede, it's time for you to calm down. How long are you going to play Taiko no Tatsujin on my chest? [TL: A rhythm game with drums.]

” ... Until Yuya-kun hugs me tightly ... ”

“No... it's embarrassing; I mean, everyone's here... how about at night ... ”

“It's a promise, okay? After everyone leaves, you'll have to hug me until I say it's okay, right?”

“Okay, okay. I'll hug you and pat you until you say it's okay, Kaede. So now... can you?”

“Fufu, I got your word. I'm looking forward to the night. Ah, yes. I will change to a special version of my costume tonight, so please look forward to it, okay?”

Eh? What does that mean?

## Chapter 120.2 Halloween SS

### Dangerous Night Party

It was now past 10pm.

The nightmarish Halloween party, where I dressed up as a woman for the first time in my life, ended without a hitch. I never want to dress like that again.

After taking a bath and getting ready for bed, I was relaxing on the sofa in the living room, which was quiet for the first time today. I really wanted to go to my bedroom and lie down.

“Please wait in the living room while I change into my special costume. Don’t peek at me, okay?”

After the bath, Kaede gave me this strict order. The costume party should have been over by now. In fact, I took off my makeup after everyone left, and quickly took off my dress and changed into my loungewear. Kaede also changed into her favorite fuzzy pajamas, but it seems she was going to dress up again. Speaking of which ...

‘Ah, yes. I will change to a special version of my costume tonight, so please look forward to it, okay?’

I heard her say something like this. What do you mean, ‘special edition’? The off-the-shoulder wolf girl was also quite cute and exposed some skin, but were you saying it would be more than that? That would be too ridiculous. Who prepared that costume in the first place?

“Yuya-kuuun! I’m ready! Please come to my bedroom!”

It was no use thinking about a mystery that had no answer. I shall go to the bedroom now that Kaede has called me. I want to get under the covers as soon as possible because I'm completely cold after staying in the hot water. It was still too early to go to bed, but I'm mentally tired today.

“Kaede, I'm coming in.”

When I opened the door slowly with a click, what I saw was Kaede on all fours on the bed in the pose of a female panther. Eh, what's going on?

“Yuya-kun! Trick or treat! Give me some candy or I'll play a trick on you! Rather, let me play tricks on you!”

Clang. I closed the door quietly and took a deep breath. I wondered if something had gone wrong with my eyes. If I hadn't gone crazy, then there was a dangerous wolf in my bedroom. How dangerous was it to expose so much skin! Especially the chest area that was highly destructive. Well, that was a new outfit, I see, but anyway, that Kaede is dangerous. Mainly in the sense that it could rapidly blow away my reasoning!

“I-I'm sure I'm looking at it wrong. There's no way Kaede would dress like that. Yeah, my inner desire must have made me hallucinate. That must be it.”

I said to myself and opened the door again to see Kaede standing in front of me. She had teary eyes and her cheeks were puffed up.

“Yuya-kun! Why did you close the door right away!? You're terrible! I'm protesting adamantly!”

That gesture was very cute. It was, but it was also very difficult to look at. Where did you get that costume which feels more erotic than nakedness!? I'm tempted to ask.

“What do you think? My mom got me one for Halloween night. She said that people call it a 'skimpy outfit'!”

So the culprit was Sakurako-saaaaan—!! Next time I see you, I'll prepare a gift for you. Then I'll have to bow deeply to her. No, that was not what I

meant! What kind of thing did you prepare!? Of all things, you chose this!

“Yu-Yuya-kun? What’s the matter, with you being so silent... Well, I’d like to know what you think ...”

I swallowed my gulp and looked at Kaede again. In a way, this costume was truly dangerous.

Kaede was wearing animal ears that could be mistaken for the real thing. A long lacy gourd robe with the net tights made her smooth legs look even more s\*\*y. Fluffy fur was wrapped around her neck, wrists and ankles. But the reason why the costume was called dangerous was because of the upper and lower body parts.

The top was a micro bikini containing such a small area of fabric that I wanted to ask how it even fit. The fur and the fluffy fabric looked just as comfortable to the touch as the fur, and you could see the upper, lower, and side area of Kaede’s big, jiggly b\*\*\*\*\*s. It was awesome to say the least. The undershorts underneath around her lower area also only covered a minimal amount of it, which also stimulated my lust. The big fluffy tail attached to her buttocks was also cute.

With such a triple crown combination, not only was the neckline captivating, but also the healthy-looking stomach was exposed. Her beautiful back would also be fully unguarded. I don’t know what’s going on anymore!

“U-um... Yuya-kun? Don’t just keep quiet, say something... I-I’m still a little embarrassed about this, you know?”

The reasoning inside me felt like crumbling with a rattling sound. No, it already did, right? If she were to confess that she was actually embarrassed while wearing such a stimulating outfit, I would be knocked out by her cuteness, wouldn’t I? Of course I would!

“Uu... I was being too aggressive after all... mother’s a liar... mou.”

I can’t do this. In front of the most erotic and cute Kaede in Japan, I was flying away from my consciousness with the combined loss of my

vocabulary, and Kaede turned her head down, half crying.

“You see, Kaede. I mean...”

“I know, right? It doesn’t look good on me anyway, right? Yeah, I already know. My mother had a good time pranking me. I was foolish enough to put it on because she told me that Yuya-kun would be pleased with it.”

Kaede was more depressed than I’d ever seen her because I didn’t say anything. Think, think of some words!

“That’s not true at all! The reason I couldn’t say anything was because it looked so amazingly s\*\*y, or rather it was more erotic and dangerous than nakedness... My mental mind had been on the verge of explosion... In other words, what I wanted to say was that it looked very pretty.”

“... Yuya-kun. Mou, say it again.”

“... It’s very pretty. And it’s erotic. It’s the best.”

I couldn’t think properly because my brain was on the verge of exploding by being aroused by an outfit that was even more seductive than naked. Because of that, I didn’t really know what I was saying, but the moment I finished, Kaede jumped into my chest.

“Ehehe. I’m so happy!”

Oh my god, this wolf girl is really cute! I stroked her head, and Kaede smiled at me with happily shining eyes. I was also happy to be able to taste all kinds of soft touches.

“Hey, Yuya-kun. I’m going back to my first question, okay?”

“Question? I don’t mind, but what?”

“Mou! Today is Halloween, right?”

Ah, so that was it. Thanks to the immense destructive power of Kaede’s costume, it hadn’t even left the corner of my mind.

“Yuya-kun, it’s trick-or-treat! Give me some candy or I’ll eat you, okay? Is it okay?”

Well, how should I answer? Of course, I had no such thing as candy. There was nothing. But it was fun to tease the cute wolf who was waiting for my answer with sparkling eyes.

“I’m in trouble... I don’t have any sweets. If I don’t, will I get eaten? If it’s such a cute and erotic wolf, I’d rather be eaten—!”

Before I could say I wanted to be eaten, I was kissed by Kaede, who quickly put her arms around my neck and brought our bodies close together. The sweet kisses gradually shifted from soft lips nibbling each other to a sweet and erotic thick one.

The sound of water echoed in the quiet bedroom as our tongues entwined each other in a passionate way. Kaede’s hot breath leaked from her mouth from time to time. Her pure white skin was red and steamy, and I could tell at a glance that she was aroused. But more than that, I’m sure I’m also—

“Fufu. Yuya-kun is so cute with his eyes.”

“That’s because... because Kaede ... ”

“Ah, mou! You’re really cute! I love Yuya-kun like that too!”

She pulled me by the hand to go to the bed, and I followed with a wobbly gait like a ghost. And the next thing I knew, I was being pushed down by Kaede.

“I’ll have to play many, many pranks on the bad kid who didn’t give me sweets. Also, Yuya-kun usually bullies me by whispering in my ear, so I have to return the favor.”

Her eyes were like heart-shaped eyes as she licked her tongue in front of her captured prey. Her b\*\*\*\*\*s swaying plumply before my eyes made me want to touch it, but unfortunately, my hand was being restricted by Kaede’s.

“It’s okay, Yuya-kun. I’ll be gentle... and I’ll eat you.”



The annual harvest festival. Under the light of the golden full moon, we spent a sweet night.

In addition, Kaede, who became a wolf, was highly dangerous.

# Chapter 120 Welcome to the trial for new students

It was after school. Shinji and I had changed into our uniforms as we stood on the field. In front of us, there was a line of freshmen boys in their gym clothes. There were almost thirty of them. Even if it was just a trial membership, there were still too many, weren't there?

"Hahaha. It's a big difference compared to our time. But I guess it's understandable, right? Look at the back."

'Here', Shinji urged me, and I turned my eyes outside the ground only to see two beautiful girls with different hair colors. One of them, a beautiful, slender goddess, met my eyes and waved widely with a smile on her face. [TL: ... Isn't she thicc?]

"YUYA—KUNNN! GOOD LUCK!!"

Why did you come down here, Kaede? I'm glad you're cheering for me, but thanks to you, I've got the attention of the entire soccer team, not just the freshmen boys! How come you used to watch me from the classroom?

"Well, isn't it due to her wanting to appeal to you? Like, so that no one else will have you in mind? She's showing off, Yuya."

"Hahahaha. If you're going to say that, you should look, too. Look at her next to Kaede, huh?"

"SHIN-KUUUUN!!! LIGHT!!"

Standing next to Kaede was Otsuki-san. Her small body jumping up and down and cheering Shinji hard looked innocent and cute with her still young

appearance. But on the other hand, it was poisonous to see her b\*\*\*\*\*s, which were even bigger than Kaede's, jiggling violently. Nikaido would cry if she were to see that.

"Huh. Why even Akiho? It has never happened before ... "

"I think the reason is the same as Kaede's, okay? 'I'm not giving Shin-kun to anyone!' That's Otsuki-san's way of showing off. You're loved, Shin-kun."

I've always been agitated by Shinji. Whenever I get a chance to fight back, which did not come often, I had to take it. As expected, Shinji, who was not used to receiving live support from his girlfriend, was unusually red-faced and embarrassed.

"I think I understand now how Yuya feels. It's nice to be cheered on, but it's even more embarrassing than I imagined."

Shinji said, scratching his cheek politely. I'm glad that you finally understand my feelings. I once again put out my fist to celebrate the friendship that had grown between me and Shinji, my best friend, as I bumped it with a knuckle.

"Hey, you popular guys out there! It's okay to be overly happy because she's cheering you on, but we're about to have our annual red and white game! Don't show any embarrassing plays!"

The one who shouted this was Sugiya Koutarou, a third-year student who was appointed captain this year. We were going to proceed with the usual red and white match between the new students and the current students of the soccer club. This had two meanings, one was to welcome the new students and the other was to assess their abilities. And it looked like Shinji and I were in the starting lineup.

"Because the new students need to see the power of our club's ace, and they need to vent about wanting to have a pretty girlfriend! Yeah, I wish I had a girlfriend too, damn it!"

Sugiya was the captain of the team, but he was also a mood maker. No matter how bad the game was, he would always be cheerful and positive, inspiring

his friends. In a sense, he was like a fan. It was a shame that he sometimes went out of control.

“Well, Yuya. Now that I’m going to be in the game, I can’t let them see me in a bad state.”

“That’s right. It’s in front of Kaede. I have to show her how cool I am. But it’s the same for you, isn’t it?”

“Haha. Of course I do. I’m sorry about the new students, but let’s go all out.”

‘Right’, I replied, exchanging fists again before I brushed my bangs up to get into the spirit. Shinji had mentioned it already, but if Kaede was watching, there was no need to go easy on the new students in a red and white match.

“KYAAAA!! Did you see that, Akiho-chan! That’s Yuya-kun raising his hair! That’s the signal to turn on his motivation! It’s really cool already!”

“I’m sure it’s cool to brush your hair up like this. I wonder if Shin-kun will do the same ... ”

Here, she requested it, ‘Shin-kun’. Why don’t you brush your hair up?

“Ugh, shut up! There’s no way I can do that right after Yuya! There’s such a thing as timing, you know!”

“Yes, yes, I get it.”

And we stood side by side in the middle of the ground. The eyes of the freshmen facing us were filled with a fiery fighting spirit. Another way to describe it was that it was a killing spirit.

“YUYA-KUN!! GO FOR IT!!”

At the same time as Kaede’s cheering, the whistle sounded starting the match.

# Chapter 121 Sakurako's Direct Service

“Yuya-kun was the coolest today! I knew Yuya-kun seemed different when he was playing soccer!”

“How many times have you told me already? I’m already really embarrassed, please give me a break.”

As we ate dinner, Kaede began to talk about her impressions of today’s red and white match for I didn’t know how many times already. As for me, I was already full, but Kaede-san didn’t seem to be satisfied.

“Because, because! It was really cool to see Yuya-kun brush up his hair just before the whistle blew, and it was so cool to see Yuya-kun leave his opponents behind like the wind after receiving a long pass from Higure-kun, run brilliantly and shoot a goal!”

I was so embarrassed that I could only smile fondly at Kaede as she spoke in a single breath, her eyes shining like a child’s when seeing a star athlete in person.

“You know what Akiho-chan, who was next to me, said? She said that Yuya-kun looks like a different person when he is playing soccer. But Akiho-chan who was cheering for Higure-kun was also like a different person, though!”

‘Nyahaha’, Kaede laughed. This unnecessarily high-spirited feeling was just like my mother after drinking. Well, that was okay. So Otsuki-san was a different person too. I’m wondering what she was like.

“Fufu. Akiho-chan was like a maiden when she stared at Higure-kun! She

was holding her hands as if she was praying the whole time and cheering for Higure-kun with all her heart. Surprising, don't you think?"

It was true that Otsuki-san usually releases her aura of love for Shinji at full throttle, so I thought she was the one who was cheering even more excitedly than Kaede, but I didn't expect her to be praying quietly. It was kind of cute when you think about it. Was this what you would call 'gap moe'? But now that I think about it, Kaede's cheering with great excitement could also be considered a 'gap moe'.

"Mou, what else can I be other than being so excited when I've already been rooting so hard for you! I'll admit that I was excited to see Yuya-kun running all over the place on the field, but that's just because you were so cool! So it's not my fault!"

"That's quite a rant, Kaede."

For some reason, without knowing, it was my fault. I don't get it. I wanted to argue with her, but Kaede just laughed at me and won't let me retort.

"But because Yuya-kun didn't take it easy on them, all of the new team members quickly turned into zombies. I felt a little sorry for that."

"I can't help it, right? I was playing in front of Kaede, so I had to give it my all no matter who the opponent was. But thanks to that, I had to be replaced in the middle of the match."

After two shots on goal in the first fifteen minutes of the game, the coach was angry with me for overdoing it and ordered me to be replaced. Shinji, by the way, was playing the role of a game-maker, so he stayed on the pitch until the end. I also don't get it.

Also, the reason why they looked like zombies was not because I didn't take it easy on them. The actual reason was given to me by Sugitani-senpai. He said...

'It's because Hitotsuba-san's cheering never stops when you're in the game! You're monopolizing the cheers of the cutest high school girl in Japan! It's

just so awful, damn it!’

That was how Kaede became the reason why they turned into zombies, but I didn’t want to reveal it. Because I want Kaede’s cheers to be targeted only towards me.

“That’s why. Let’s reward Yuya-kun for all his hard work today! How about I wash, your, back?”

She threw a kiss at me at the end. I wish she would have kissed me directly instead of throwing a kiss anyway.

“No, it’s okay, I’ll flush myself.”

I politely declined. Why? Because Kaede’s been going to all kinds of extremes lately! We used to wash each other in our bathing suits – Kaede in her high school swimsuit – but since that day, she had been asking for mixed baths without any clothes on. I’m trying to keep my rational mind from collapsing, but if Kaede, who was wet and shiny from her shower, presses me, I would be overwhelmed.

“Why not? Don’t you want to take a bath with me, Yuya-kun!? Please let me wash your back! I’ll give you lots of service!”

“Se-service? W-what kind of service, by the way?”

I know I shouldn’t ask. I know that, but I’m also a generally healthy boy. If she said ‘service’ in the bath, I’d be curious.

“Fufu. That is, you know. It’s passed down by my mother, the direct washing te—.”

“STOOOOP!! I won’t let you say anything else!”

Sakurako-san! What kind of thing did you teach a high school student!? I’ll call you directly next time and protest!

“Why not!? She said that every time she did this, my father would be happy and get better! She taught me a lot of tips and tricks, so I really want you to

taste it too, Yuya-kun!”

Yeah! You’re actually not wrong in what you’re saying! I’d like to taste it; but, isn’t that too extreme!? Because if Kaede’s body is covered with bubbles and sticking to me – no, I’m getting dizzy just thinking about it. Can’t we just have a normal bath together!?

“Fufu. Yuya-kun, you just imagined it, didn’t you? You imagined me washing your body. Did you like it? Don’t you want to feel good?”

Before I knew it, Kaede was behind me and she was hugging me. Then she whispered in my ear with a sweet exhale. It was a foul thing to transform from a spoiled child into an alluring succubus!

“This is my reward for your hard work, Yuya-kun. I’ll make you feel good a lot. Let’s get bubbly together, shall we?”

As soon as she bit my earlobe, my heart rate skyrocketed. If I don’t do something, I’ll be swept away and subjected to extreme services as usual.

“All I want is to make Yuya-kun happy! So it’s okay, right? Let’s have a bubble bath together! Bubble baths are definitely fun, right?”

Kaede, frustrated with my refusal by shaking my head, shook my shoulders. All right, let’s take a bubble bath! You don’t have to flush my back, we can take a bubble bath together! That should give me a break for the day!

“I’ve got your word then! I’ll give you a break for today. Fufu. If that’s the case, I’ll go prepare for a bubble bath!”

Ah, I messed up. With the way she was talking, she would be asking me about every little thing. Kaede remembered things like this even when they were not important.

“Bath with Yuya-kun! A bubble bath with Yuya-kun! I’m looking forward to it!”

I sighed as I watched Kaede’s back as she hummed her way to the bathroom. But secretly, I’m actually looking forward to taking that bubble bath, so I



guess I'm a lucky man.

The sight of Kaede covered in bubbles. I can't even imagine it.

Ping-pooooong.

As if to pull me back to reality from the dazzling fantasy land, the doorbell rang to announce a visitor. Who could it be?

# Chapter 122 Miyamoto-san's Apology

The visitor was Miyamoto-san. And for some reason, there was a box of sweets in his hand.

“I’m sorry for causing you trouble.”

He opened his speech with an apology and bowed deeply. Suddenly, Kaede and I had no idea what he was talking about. I’d rather thank Miyamoto-san for all the help he had provided us.

“I heard about this from my daughter, Yui. It seems that she has done something to disturb the two of you...”

I see. So Yui told you about what happened today. But how that leads to an apology, I have no idea.

“Please raise your head, Miyamoto-san. Yui-chan didn’t do anything wrong, right? Isn’t that right, Yuya-kun?”

“Yes. I think she was happy to see Kaede after a long time, right? I don’t think it’s annoying.”

“If that’s the case, that’s fine... but she also said that she came halfway home with the two of you, who usually go home alone...”

Ah, I almost shouted. After the club activities were over, I was about to leave with Kaede who was waiting for me as usual, when Yui came over and we all decided to go home together.

Apparently, Yui was going to join the basketball team, and today she played

a red and white game with the current students as a welcome, which happened to be the same as the soccer team. She was overwhelmed by Nikaido's play then, and was so impressed that she became a fan. She was a sinful woman, too, wasn't she?

Yui had to take the train in the opposite direction from us, so we parted ways at the station, but she kept rambling until then. Machine gun talk was exactly what she was doing. Otsuki-san was also a talker, but Yui might even be more than that.

"Fufu. Don't worry, Miyamoto-san. It was just a walk to the station. Once she gets used to high school life, she'll quit doing it, so we're not worried about it. Isn't that right, Yuya-kun?"

"You're right, Kaede. It hasn't even been a week since she started high school. I'm sure she will be fine on her own once she makes friends."

And Yui was like a little sister to Kaede. So I guess you could say that she was like a sister to me then. Besides, Kaede and I were both children without any siblings, so an energetic girl like Yui was cute. It makes me want to spoil her.

"Thank you very much. I'm relieved to hear you both say that."

"Yes, don't worry. So please don't be too upset with Yui, okay?"

"I'll take care of it. If I stay any longer, I'll be disturbing you both. Sorry for the late night."

Miyamoto bowed deeply and left. I thought Miyamoto-san's education policy was a little too strict, coming all the way to apologize for something that we didn't even care about.

"He doesn't have a choice. I heard that Miyamoto went through a lot of hardships, though not as much as Yuya-kun, whose parents suddenly left and left you with nothing but debts."

When I found out that my parents had disappeared, leaving behind a huge

debt, I felt surprised, sad, and inexplicably lonely. However, Kaede saved me before I got caught up in that, and I am now able to live happily ever after.

“To Miyamoto-san, it seems that it was my grandfather who saved him. Ever since then, Miyamoto-san has been loyal to the Hitotsuba family. I think that’s why he couldn’t let it go when he thought that his daughter, Yui-chan, was causing trouble.”

‘But he really doesn’t have to worry about it’, Kaede said with a wry smile. You’re right. We, the party concerned, don’t think of Yui as a nuisance. Miyamoto-san’s fears were unfounded.

“I’m relieved that you think the same way, Yuya-kun. Besides... I’m also happy to be able to live with Yuya-kun like this!”

Kaede jumped into my chest with a burst of energy. I wish she could stop the sudden dive because it was dangerous, but such complaints quickly fizzled out in front of the touch of Kaede’s soft chest and comforting scent.

“I think the bath is ready soon, so let’s just keep hugging and go to the bathroom! Ehehe, a bubble bath with Yuya-kun...”

The drooling Kaede tried to push me to the bathroom, increasing the level of closeness. If she pushes me like this, what would await me afterwards would be a happy, but also embarrassing undressing time. I had to avoid that at all costs! But, the feeling on my chest took all the strength out of me!

“I am aware of Yuya-kun’s weaknesses. Yuya-kun loves them, don’t you? My t\*\*s—.”

“AAAAAAAH!!! I won’t let you say more than that!”

Kaede’s sweetly whispered words in my ear woke up the fiery tsukkomi power that was sleeping inside me which succeeded in pulling me off. I sure do like them, though!

Kaede’s b\*\*\*\*\*s were not only large, but their shapes were as beautiful and firm as a work of art. And yet, they were also so soft and jiggly that if you

were to bury your face in them, you would feel as if you were drifting away without caring about anything else. They were filled with dreams, hopes, and love.

... What am I talking about? It's not like I had buried my face in Kaede's b\*\*\*s or anything to spoil myself with them, you know?

"Yuya-kun's a pervert..."

"Why would you think that!?"

"You're really too perverted. But then, if you like them so much, why do you refuse my bubbly service? I thought I could pleasure Yuya-kun, but... it seems it won't work."

Eh, did the mood just change? It's just one kanji though. [TL: Kanji and feeling (which I changed to mood) are spelled the same.] No, this was not the time to be making such a joke. If I didn't do anything, I'm really going to turn into a pervert.

"If you say so much, I'll ask you to do it. Kaede's bubbly service. You're going to wash me, aren't you? Besides... it makes me feel good, doesn't it?"

"... Huh? Yu-Yuya-kun?"

I lifted her chin quickly while gently stroking Kaede's cheek. No matter how many times I taste it, I never get tired of those plump, cherry-red lips. Her face was puzzled by the suddenness, but she was now expecting something. It was really cute.

"But it's not fair to only have Kaede do that, so I'll wash your back too. I'll clean every inch of your body."

"———!!!!???"

Boom, Kaede's face turned bright red in an instant. The steam was rising from her head, as if she had exceeded the limit of what she could understand. I think it was a perverted thing to say, but it would probably be good to taste her own medicine, who got too carried away. You should take things step-by-

step, you know?

“Yu-Yuya-kun, you baka! Of course I’m too embarrassed to do that!”

“Then it’s just a bubble bath for today. Why don’t you go ahead and see what it’s like? I’ll come back later.”

I pushed Kaede, who was in a state of overheating and had lost all strength from her body, into the bathroom. I looked up to the heavens as I closed the door and took a deep breath.

“Haaa... You’re still too stimulating, Kaede.”

I think I’ll give Sakurako-san a lecture and a thank you call.

## Chapter 122.5 What to do on a day when there are four 1's in a row

Lunch break. The usual six of us (me, Kaede, Nikaido, Shinji, Otsuki-san and Yui-chan) were relaxing after having lunch at the cafeteria when Otsuki-san, the troublemaker, pulled out a box of sweets out of nowhere. An after-meal snack?

“Tsk, tsk. That’s naïve of you, Yoshi. Don’t you know what day it is today?”

You’re talking about another special day again. The month of June was a month full of commemorations. You had a good tummy day a few days ago.

“It’s Pocky Day! And it’s official! And on such a memorable day, there’s only one thing to do! That’s right, a pocky game!”

Oh boi, another one of Otsuki-san’s usual pranks. It’s fine that you love to celebrate, but you don’t just want to have fun, you really want to create a storm. Come on, come on, Yui-chan. ‘Ooooh!’ Don’t react like that. You’ll only make her happy.

“Hey, Akiho. Don’t tell me you’re going to play that pocky game right here?”

“Oh, that’s right, Ai-chan! You’re right!”

For real? Seriously, you were going to play a pop game here? Nikaido was holding her head with her hands as she slumped her shoulders. Meanwhile, Kaede was smiling bitterly, and for some reason Yui’s eyes were sparkling. This situation was just utter chaos. Shinji, do something.

“Ahahahaha... Sorry, Yuya. I can't do it. No one can stop Aiko from becoming like that. You know that, don't you, Yuya?”

Shinji scratched his cheek and let out a dry laugh. Now that my partner (her boyfriend) had given up on her, I was left with no choice but to resign myself to boarding a runaway train with no way to get off. Although I was unwilling.

“Well then! We have limited time, so we'll start right away!”

With that, Otsuki-san reached into her bag again and took out six split chopsticks. Only two of them had the tips painted red. Does this mean it was a lottery?

“Yup! Yoshi, you're brilliant! We'll use this lottery to decide who will play against whom! It'll be more exciting that way, right!?”

Shinji. I'm sorry to break it to you, but I'm still of the opinion that this runaway train should be stopped before it leaves, no? Right? That's a bit too playful of her, isn't it!?

“If that's what you mean, well, okay. It's kind of enjoyable, right?”

“... Oi, what are you doing, Nikaido?”

“What, Yoshizumi. You look so scared. This is just a game, right? It may be exciting, but it's only a game. Or is it that Yoshizumi wants to kiss?”

What!? I'm not thinking of that at all!? Could you please not say anything that could be misinterpreted!?

“Mou... if you want to kiss me so badly, just tell me and I'll kiss you as much as you want, Yuya-kun.”

“Kaede!? How can that be!? I'm not ... ”

“Yuya-kun... don't you want to kiss me?”

Why do you do that!? Please don't stare at me with such a sad face with your eyes watering. It makes me want to ignore the fact that this is the school



cafeteria and it's right in the middle of the day, and hug her.

“Yes, yes! Don't suddenly create a strawberry space! Come on, draw the lottery now!”

Ootsuki-san grabbed the sticks and held it out to me. This was truly a fateful draw. If by any chance I draw the winning stick, I will fall prey to this embarrassing game. Unless, of course, it's Kaede. Rather, I don't even want to think about it, with anyone other than Kaede.

“Has everyone chosen which one to draw? Then, let's go! SEEED-NOO!!”

Otsuki-san shouted as we pulled the sticks we chose at the same time. There was no red mark on the stick I chose. Who is it? Who pulled it off!

“THE ONES WHO DREW ARE — AI-CHAN AND KAEDE-CHAN!!!!”

“Eh... so... I want to be happy that Yuya-kun didn't pull it, but I rather have mixed feelings ... ”

“Ahahaha. I'm starting to feel kind of bad for you too, Yoshizumi. If you want, you can take my place?”

‘Nikaido-san and Kazuha-san are playing a game of pocky...?’

‘Oh wow. A pocky game between prince Nikaido-san and princess Hitotsuba-san is a miracle! I-I have to take a video!’

‘We need to make it permanent! This has to be a treasure for our Meiwadai High School!’

The students in the cafeteria began to buzz in unison. I understood how they felt. After all, Kaede, the cutest high school girl in Japan, and Nikaido, the prince of Meiwadai, were playing a game of pocky. That was a miraculous moment that would only happen once in a lifetime. I could understand why you would want to take a picture of it.

“A pocky game between a prince and a princess, huh? This is very picturesque... guhehe.”

” ... Akiho. you’re drooling. Wipe it off.”

“The pocky game between Kaede-nee and Nikaido-senpai... This is... This is not good. Guhe.”

Yui, you should wipe your drool too. Otsuki-san who coughed deliberately and regained her composure took out a pack of Pocky from the bag and handed it to Kaede.

“Yeah... and... Akiho, are you sure you want to do this? Do I have to do it?”

“Of course, Kaede! Once the game starts, there’s no stopping it until the end! That’s why I need you to suck it! Are you ready to do it too, Ai-chan!?”

“Yeah, I’m ready whenever you are.”

Nikaido replied with a princely smile. Why was she so excited? I even thought that Nikaido was actually the one who enjoyed this situation the most. Kaede made a troubled sound and then...

“I-I understand. Then... Hmph.”

She took a mouthful of pocky and pointed it at Nikaido. It was indescribably cute that she was trembling with nervousness. I might as well take a picture of this.

“Huh. You’re nervous too, aren’t you, Hitotsuba-san? But don’t worry. I’ll be gentle.”

“—!!!?”

Nikaido said in a low, s\*\*y voice, and then gently put her hands on Kaede’s shoulders and closed the distance between them by taking the other end of pocky as if she was bringing her face close to hers for a kiss. My heart started to beat faster as I watched.

Kaede’s cheeks started to turn red. Nikaido, on the other hand, was smug and relaxed. She slowly moved her hand from her shoulder to her face, as if to say she won’t let the shy kitten go.

“—!!!?”

Kaede's eyes widened in surprise and she let out an inaudible scream. And the students around her also gasped in unison. Otsuki-san and Yui took each other's hands and said, 'Kyaaaaah!' And Shinji was looking away in embarrassment. And as for me ...

“Yes, stop.”

They were just a few mouthfuls away from the goal when I smashed the pocky. I know Nikaido was a girl, but I was kind of, yes, kind of annoyed that Kaede was so red and nervous.

“Ah... that's too bad. We were so close... Yoshizumi, what a thing to do. Will you stay out of my way and Hitotsuba-san?”

” ... Be quiet.”

“Mou, don't give us that sulky look again. I'm just kidding. There's no way I'd seriously do that. You're surprisingly possessive, aren't you, Yoshizumi?”

Shut up. It's only natural for your heart to buzz when you see the person you love in front of you with a red face and a pounding heart. I'm the only one who was allowed to make Kaede nervous.

Ah, seriously. Nikaido was saying weird things that made me feel so embarrassed that my body started to heat up!

“Fufu. You're so loved, Hitotsuba-san.”

“Ah, ahahaha... mou, Yuya, you baka.”

Kaede looked away with her face as well as her ears red, so much so that steam was coming out of her face. While I was thinking that that part of her was cute too, the chime that announced the end of the lunch break rang.

“Ahh. So it ended with Yoshi and Kaede-chan showing off their meotoppuru skills. It was kind of the same as usual, wasn't it?”

“Don’t say that. Come on, let’s go back to class.”

Shinji soothed Otsuki-san who seemed to be unconvinced. Yui stood up slowly with an enraptured look on her face and started walking with a wobbly step. Uhh, are you okay?

“Ah, I’ll take care of Yui, Yoshizumi, take care of Hitotsuba-san. Don’t be late for class because of all the flirting, okay?”

Nikaido rushed over to Yui before I could react to her words ‘flirting at school’. Seriously. You are always saying whatever you want.

“Hey, Yuya-kun. Do you want to play a game of pocky with me?”

“Nnh!? What’s wrong with you all of a sudden, Kaede!?”

“Please answer me. Do you want to play with me?”

The way you say it! Please be careful of how you say it! That was because I felt thrilled watching Nikaido and Kaede’s exchange, and I think I’d probably be even more thrilled if I were in Nikaido’s place. I sometimes wish I could share these feelings with Kaede.

“Fufu. If Yuya-kun says so much, I don’t blame him! Let’s buy a box of pocky on our way home today! And all night with Yuya-kun... ehehe.”

That’s the daughter of the Hitotsuba family. Buying a box of them just for that. But that was not what was important. I don’t want you to play the pocky game all night long.

“If it’s an all-nighter, I’d rather have normal kisses...”

“Yu-Yuya-kun’s stupid, a pervert, a kissing monster.”

Wasn’t that terrible!? I didn’t think you needed to say that much, you know!?

As I was lamenting in my mind, Kaede gently grabbed my hand, and in a whispered voice:

“I also... want to kiss Yuya-kun a lot. Just kidding.”

Kaede laughed and ran off with a bright red face.

“That’s a foul play, Kaede.”

I stood there stunned at how cute she was. Because of that, I didn’t get back to the classroom until just before class started.

# Chapter 123: Bubble Bath Time

A bubble bath with Kaede felt really good.

“Yuya-kun! It’s amazing! It’s bubbling! Come quickly! Let’s play together!”

Kaede’s joyful voice destroyed my monologue in an instant. Sighing, I took off my clothes, wrapped the towel I had prepared around my waist, and opened the bathroom door. Suddenly, the gentle scent of cinnamon filled the air, calming my mind.

“This is amazing! Look at this, Yuya-kun! It’s as if the bath is like a blue sky! And these bubbles look like clouds floating in that sky!”

Kaede flailed about in the bathtub, cackling with excitement. I washed my body quickly and then entered the bath to face Kaede, as she beckoned me to come quickly.

“Hee... that’s definitely impressive. The blue color of the water seems so beautiful. It also makes my skin feel smooth, it feels good to do something like this once in a while.”

In addition, the large amount of bubbles floating in the water hid Kaede’s snow white skin upto an appropriate degree, emanating a different sensual beauty than usual. I wondered what was hidden underneath those bubbles. It was an enchanting bathing time where I was captivated by anticipation and excitement. Although I’m pretty sure she would be wearing a bath towel.

“Eh... Yuya-kun. Why are you sitting on the other side, and that too at the edge?”

Kaede puffed out her cheeks and glared at me with her jittery eyes. I didn’t

know why she said that, but wasn't this your usual place?

“No, it's not! Please don't try to fabricate my memories! Whenever we took a bath together, I would always hug Yuya-kun from behind!”

“That's precisely what I think you're doing, isn't it? It's true that Kaede hugged me from behind once, but not all the time!? I mean, we didn't take a bath together that often!?”

“Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee! I want to be close to you, Yuya-kun! Please give me a tight squeeze!”

Kaede slapped the surface of the water with her hands. Hey, the water will splash into your eyes! The bubbles will pop!

“Mou..... If Yuya-kun won't come, I'll go myself! You have to enter the tiger's den in order to capture the tiger!”

“That's not what it means. .... Kaede, you can't be serious!”

By the time I realized what was happening, it was already too late as Kaede jumped into my chest with a huge splash of water and bubbles. As I felt the heavenly sensation of her body, I understood everything.

“Fufu, did you notice that? Yes, it is. I don't have a towel wrapped around me to begin with.”

“Ah... why... ? It has never happened to me before!”

Since Kaede and I got together, she had been taking baths with me, albeit infrequently, but she always had a bathing suit or a bath towel wrapped around her. So why was she not wearing anything today!?

“You can hide your body in a bubble bath, you know. In fact, I just dived into Yuya-kun's embrace, but there still exist a lot of bubbles. Besides, I can feel Yuya-kun's warmth and the sound of your heartbeat much better in this way.”

Along with a huff and a swooning exhale, Kaede quietly wrapped her arms

around my waist and snuggled her head towards my heart. It did not seem good, my heart was beating faster as Kaede's twin hills pressed against me, and now that I knew she was naked, I'm in trouble. And when they hear that———

“Yuya-kun... you're really nervous”

“I mean, I'm taking a bath with Kaede... and also”

“And what's that?”

“I'm not sure if I'm nervous or excited, but! Aah, mou, don't make me say it!”

I could see that my face was getting hot, even by myself. I felt embarrassed that Kaede could see my face like that, so I turned away.

“It's not just Yuya-kun who's thrilled, you know? I'm also... I'm really nervous.”

Kaede, you know it was a foul to look up and point your moist eyes straight at me, right? Were you aiming for my heart? If so, your plan was a great success. I got shot right through the heart.

“Yuya-kun, please put your ..... ear on my heart and observe what's going on!”

With a splashing sound, Kaede got down on her knees in the tub. There were bubbles everywhere surrounding her like the armor of a goddess protecting her naked body. But it also acted as the sword that stirred up the lust within me to uncover what was hidden beneath.

“Here... listen to it. The sound of my heart beating... it's amazing, isn't it?”

Suddenly I froze and couldn't move as she gently wrapped my head and led me straight to where her heart was.

“Kaede-san... um... this is?”



“You now realize, don’t you? I’m really nervous too!”

Yes, I understand. I understand, but it was more than that. I was having my face pressed against Kaede’s chest, you know? I was sinking my face onto her b\*\*\*\*s, which felt silky on touch and being plump on top of that, ruining me. The sweet scent of cinnamon though took my thoughts away from me.

“Eh, Yuya-kun. Why don’t you say anything to me?”

Kaede asked in a somewhat wistful voice, but I didn’t care. I put my arms around her waist and hugged her so that she knew I won’t let go.

“Ah... Yuya-kun!”

“Sorry, Kaede... mou... it’s impossible.”

There was no way I could hold back with the superb fruit that I knew would be delicious in front of me. Kaede noticed that the wolf-san switch inside me had been turned on, and she stroked my head.

“Fufu, Yuya-kun. please eat gently, okay?”

“... I’ll take care of it.”

# Chapter 124.1: SS Good Couple's day

“Eh, Yuya-kun. Do you know what day it is today?”

Kaede suddenly asked me as I was washing the dishes after finishing dinner. Hmm, was today some kind of special day?

“The clue is that it’s the 22nd of November! That’s the answer right there!”

There was nothing that came to mind regarding this day. Kaede’s birthday was in July, and mine was in May, long past due. We didn’t start living together until January, so it was not an anniversary. In other words, I had no idea.

“Mou, pull yourself together, Yuya-kun! Today is Good Couples Day! Couple’s Day! Isn’t it the perfect day for us!”

“Aah, I see what you mean. We’re not a married couple yet, though.”

[TN: In Japan, November 22 is ‘the nice couple day’, or precisely ‘the nice married couple day’. Because 11.22 can be pronounced ‘li fu-fu’ which means ‘good married couple’.]

I’m pretty sure it would happen sooner or later, and if I am with Kaede, there’s no greater happiness than that, but wasn’t it too early to celebrate that?

“What do you mean by that!? It’s very important! It’s true that Yuya-kun and I are still lovers, but we’re going to become husband and wife sooner or later, so we should cherish days like this from now on!”

If you neglect it, you would be in big trouble! Kaede insisted with a snort. Why do we have to talk about that?

“Or are you saying, Yuya, that a ‘good tummy day’ or a ‘good bosom day’ is more important than a good marriage day!?”

“Guha!?”

A surprise bombardment from Kaede. I almost dropped the plate I was washing and broke it!

“In particular, I’ve heard that you used to have a ‘good bosom day’ after PE with Higure-kun, Mogi kun and the others... What do you think?”

What... ? How do you know about our conversation that day!? Don’t get me wrong, Mogi was the only one who was excited, and Shinji and I were just listening to his delusions.

Starting to reminisce.

The time was November 8th. It was the end of gym class. The boys and I had finished changing earlier than the rest of the class. As Shinji and I were waiting for Kaede and the others to return from lunch break

“Hey, Yoshizumi! It’s ‘bosom day’!”

“What the h\*\*l are you talking about? Are you stupid?”

Mogi, a member of the baseball team, approached me with a vulgar look on his face. And you say it’s ‘bosom day’? What’s wrong with that?

“Including Higurashi there are three girls in our class who have particularly amazing bosoms! Two of their boyfriends are here. Tell me all about it!”

According to Mogi, the “three owners of great bosoms” seem to be Kaede, Otsuki and Nikaido.

“Otsuki-san is exactly what I’d call a big loli bosom! They’re so tender and soft to the eyes!!”

“Eh, Yuya. Can I punish Mogi for what he did? It’s good, right? This guy... we can’t let him live, can we?”

Calm down, Shinji. I know how you feel, but you can’t do that.

“Hitotsuba-san has big b\*\*\*\*\*s, not as big as Otsuki-san’s but definitely big! And they’re beautiful, too! They are just perfect! Yoshizumi! You’re the only one I can’t forgive!”

“That’s what I’m talking about! What the h\*\*l do you think you’re doing looking at my girlfriend like that!?”

“Calm down, Yuya! Remember what you said three seconds ago!”

Don’t stop, Shinji! This man must be dealt with right here and now, or he would spread misery!

People who don’t need to cry would cry!

“The last one is Nikaido! She’s not as big as Otsuki-san or Hitotsuba-san, but she’s more than big enough! And yet, she seems to have a lot of bounce!”

“—hee. Whose b\*\*\*\*\*s are small?”

“Hmm? Who’s Nikaido? And that guy, he sometimes compares himself to Hitotsuba-san and Otsuki-san and gets all pouty? He’s so cute.”

Oh, hey, Mogi. Are you aware of who you’re talking to? I don’t think I need to tell you.

“Hee... okay, okay. Is that how Mogi looks at girls? I know exactly what you mean. You... prick.”

“Nikaido!!?? Why you!? I mean, Yoshizumi! If Nikaido was here, you should have told me!?”

“Shut up, you prick. You seem to have had your way with us, but I hope you’re ready for this.”

Nikaido had a rare blue streak on her temple. I guess this was exactly what it meant to step on a tiger's tail or to get the wrong end of the stick.

“Haha... what a light joke. Don't be so... angry!”

“Hey, hey! Don't run away... !”

But Mogi was a regular player on the baseball team. He took advantage of Nikaido's diverted attention and ran out of the classroom like a rabbit, trying to escape.

“S\*\*t... that Mogi guy won't get away with anything if he comes back. Well, let's not talk about that guy. What about Yoshizumi?”

“Hmm? What do you mean?”

“Don't make me say it. I mean... do you really prefer the big one?”

Nikaido-san!? What are you even talking about!? You're asking me about that of all people!?

“Eh, eh! What do you think? Tell me, Yoshizumi. Do you like big guys like Hitotsuba or Akiho?”

My brain went numb at the sound of her voice, which was different from the usual, and had a certain voluptuousness to it. Her eyes were also somewhat moist, and instead of the usual prince, she looked like a princess.

“No, can we not have a conversation regarding this?”

“... Che. You're very tight-lipped.”

Don't be so tongue-tied!? There was no way I could answer that question in the first place!? And you know what they said? Everyone was different and yet everyone was good!

“It's a beautiful thought. What about Higurashi then? Do you think boys like big ones in the first place?”

“Me? I think I like Akiho the most!”

“...Che. The couple.”

“Blow up, you couple.”

That seemed unreasonable! Shinji shouted, and then Kaede and Otsuki came over to finish the story.

End of recollection.

“So, after all, Yuya-kun, do you like big ones like Akiho? Or do you want a beautiful shaped one like Ai-chan? Am I.....no good?”

I didn't expect to be asked the same question again after two weeks. What does this answer have to do with the 'good marriage day'?

“Of course. Isn't this a confirmation of us being a good couple?”

Kaede then stood up, walked behind me as I was washing the dishes, and hugged me. She deliberately pressed her bosom together and whispered while blowing more breath into my ear.

“It's just me. I'm the only one who can hug you, Yuya-kun. It's a privilege only for me.”

“Kaede”

“That's why. Yuya-kun is also the only one who can hug me, you know?”

A gentle sweet breath from her sends an electric current down my spine. My reasoning wavers as Kaede tightens her arms around my waist to increase the degree of closeness.

“Yuya-kun does the housework as a matter of course. The food is delicious, and if I'm not careful, I'm afraid I will be spoiled.”

Kaede changed the subject and started praising me. If I don't say something, I would be at her mercy. I had to take back the initiative!

“No, that’s not true... Hmm... I can’t just leave it to Kaede... Isn’t that obvious.”

“Fufu. I think that’s what’s so great about Yuya-kun, that he can say such things without hesitation.”

Hey, Kaede!? Don’t bite my earlobe so sweetly! Although It’s not painful, in fact, it’s almost pleasurable. Even the sniffles on my neck have become a dangerous spice right now.

“For those n\*\*\*\*\*y husbands who ruin their wives by cooking dinner and even washing the dishes, today... they need to be rewarded.”

A reward? What the h\*\*l was that? Well, I don’t expect it to be like last month’s Halloween!? Kaede was going to be the wolf!? No, I mean, that was really good!

As I was thinking of something stupid, Kaede quickly let go of my body and my blissful moment was quickly over. Eh, where are you going?

“Please don’t look so sad. I’ll bring you a special reward, so please wait for me.”

Kaede then went to the refrigerator and opened its door. What she took out from there was—

“Ta-da! I’m giving Yuya a chocolate cake as a reward for all his hard work! Let’s eat it together!”

The chocolate cake that Kaede-san made for me on Valentine’s Day before. Could it be that she made it again for this day?

“I am always grateful to Yuya-kun. I made this song to express my gratitude to him and my hope that we can continue to be a good couple.”

“Kaede... Thank you. I’m so happy.”

We were not married yet, though. But to say that now would be foolish. Because that was what I was hoping for with Kaede.

“Ehehe. If you say so, it was worth the effort to make it. Aah, let’s have dessert after dinner! Let’s feed each other!”

“It’s a little embarrassing to feed each other……. Okay, okay, I get it. Let’s say “ahh” to each other.”

When I tried to tell her that I was in trouble, she puffed out his cheeks, so I quickly raised the white flag. There was something foul yet cute about puffing up and looking up in order to appeal to me, wasn’t there?

“Fufu. Let’s have a sweet and debaucherous night, shall we?”

Japan’s prettiest high school girl was going to eventually become Japan’s prettiest wife.



## Chapter 124.2: SS A Good Bath Day

As I was relaxing on the sofa after finishing dinner, Kaede, who had just finished washing the dishes, sat down next to me. And—

“Yuya-kun. What day is it today?”

“What do you mean!? How many times have we talked about it this month!?”

“Umm. Is this the third time?”

Yes, you read that right! This was the third time I started a story with this beginning. Don’t you get tired of it? I mean, why are there so many of these events in November.

“Aah, Yuya-kun. If you come this far, four or five times won’t make a difference. So, I’ll ask you again. What day is it, today?”

“You will still proceed with it after all, won’t you? Let’s see, it’s on the 26th of November, okay? Which implies? A good day for a bath?”

“Bing bong! You were right, Yuya-kun! It’s a good bath day! That means it’s the day for a mixed bath!”

Kaede seemed happy with a big smile on her face. But to me, it didn’t seem any more important than Poppin’ Day or Good Couple’s Day. Why was that? Because it was too late for that.

“Kaede... I’m sorry to say although I’m happy to see you, but even though it’s a mixed bathing day, we’re still taking baths together quite often, aren’t we?”

“Tsk, tsk. Yuya-kun, you don’t understand. Sure, we’ve bathed together many times, but there’s a point to being in the bath together on this day!”

“What’s in your heart?”

“I want to flirt with Yuya-kun in the bath again today!”

All right. I’ll pretend I didn’t hear that. Now, I think I’ll watch the anime I’ve recorded.

“Hey, Yuya-kun! Why are you so gracefully ignoring me!? You’re terrible!”

I guess I ended up being curious last week. I’d like to watch it in real time if I could, but I’m afraid it would affect me the next morning... Still I’m looking forward to it.

“Uuh... Yuya-kun ignores me... this is the beginning of a domestic separation... sigh.”

No, domestic separation? Wasn’t that too far-fetched? I know you are faking it, but don’t make a raspy sound. It hurts my heart.

“I’m sure he won’t sleep on the futon with me anymore... He won’t wake me up in the morning, and I’ll be late more often and then stay home. I’ll become Yuya-kun’s junior”

“Oh, um... Kaede? What are you—”

“It might be a good idea to call Yuya-kun ‘Senpai’. In order to prevent a rut, it is necessary to create a new atmosphere. It’s called ‘leveraging’.”

What? Wasn’t the story moving in a strange direction? It was supposed to start with a good bath day, but now we were talking about a situation where Kaede becomes my junior and calls me ‘Senpai’? No, well, to be honest, it seemed intriguing to be pampered by Kaede calling me senpai, but still.

“Do you think so too, Yuya-kun!? If that’s the case, how about taking a bath together with your junior who is staying at a senpai’s house?”

I see. So you were talking about a proactive junior who would go on to suggest things like, “I’ll give you a back massage as a gesture of gratitude for letting me spend the night”. He would refuse at first, but eventually he would be overpowered and they end up taking a bath together.

“That’s right! As expected of Yuya-kun, you’re a fast learner! That’s why I’m going to be your junior for one day!”

“Hmm? What are you talking about, Kaede? I have no idea about it?”

“Mou... Pull yourself together, Senpai.”

Aah!!?? Kaede called me “senpai” in a sweet voice while hanging from a branch!? This destructive power is terrible. It’ll wipe out my reason!

“Eh, senpai. In order to thank you for all the help you’ve provided me... well... would you like to take a bath with me?”

Kaede looks up at me with her moist eyes. I want to give up thinking, but if I didn’t say something back, I would be swallowed by the big wave. But my desperate resistance felt like a fish being washed up on land, meaningless in front of Kaede, who had turned into a junior character.

“Senpai... can’t I? I’d like to serve Senpai, who’s always been good to me... Is that okay?”

For a moment, I thought about how a junior girl would never say something like she wanted to serve me, but it fizzled out. She placed her hand gently on my chest and looked at me as if she was pleading to me, and I had no choice but to nod.

“Uh... yeah... okay. Well, then... shall we?”

When I answered that, a beautiful smile bloomed on Kaede’s face. Then she hugged me with the same joyful momentum.

“Ehehe. I understand. Then I’m going to wash your back, Senpai!”

“Haha... please be gentle with me, okay?”

“Please leave it to me! ah, so... eh... and... I’ll be serving you a lot, so please expect it, senpai.”

“... really. Please be gentle with me.”

But Kaede didn’t respond to this, and instead smiled in a horrified and seductive manner. Oh, this gives me a bad vibe.

“Hmph. Senpai is my only senpai. I’ll make you boneless.”

We should be careful every November. I promised myself that after this.

# Chapter 124: After taking a bubble bath

The bath with Kaede felt sweet and was very soothing along with it being stimulating enough.

“The usual gentle Yuya-kun is wonderful, but the Yuya-kun in wolf mode is also wonderful. I especially love the mean words he whispered in my ear.”

“I won’t let you say it!!?? How dare you say that before we go to bed!?”

Just as I was about to finish getting ready to get into bed, Kaede ruined my monologue once again. Why would you take the trouble of reminding me that!?

“Because... Yuya-kun is so handsome and I think it is foul when you say things like ‘Eh, Kaede. Your face seems to be red, but... why?’, in my ear! In addition to that, you kept asking me things that annoyed me... Yuya-kun is an oni-douche!”

“Oh, oni-damn it!? You can’t be serious!?”

The reason I wanted to whisper in her ear in the first place was because Kaede’s reaction was so cute, wasn’t it? She shook her head in a ‘no, no, no,’ manner but her face would turn as red as a ripe apple when she would whisper back to me, which made me happy.

Normally, she would tease me and then aggressively stick to me, but at times like this, she would instantly become quiet like a kitten and purr in a cute voice, making it hard to reason with her.

“Yah, I knew you were having fun! MOU, Yuya-kun’s devilish! Ecchi!”

Please don't use words like that with your handsome face!"

[TN: Ecchi is a Japanese slang for perverted, lewd and many other words. In this case it refers to 'n\*\*\*\*y'. Let me know if I should be using such words or rather TL the original intent.]

"Okay. If Kaede says so much, I won't do it again... Sorry."

"Eh... ? You're going to stop doing it?"

Since Kaede doesn't want me to, I won't do it again. I don't want to do anything that Kaede wouldn't like. As for me, it would be a pity that I won't be able to hear Kaede's cute voice anymore, but I shall stop whispering in her ear.

"Eh, ano... Isn't that... a little too sloppy... Umm I'm saying, I also like Yuya-kun whispering in my ears, or rather I love it... so don't stop"

"I couldn't hear you well at the end because you were whispering... What do you want me to do, Kaede? You want me to stop? Or... you don't want me to stop?"

Kaede moaned and groaned. I'm sorry, but it was really cute to see her struggling with her cheeks puffed up to the limit, dyed red.

"No, please don't stop! MOU, Yuya-kun, you're so mean! How dare you make me say that before I go to bed!? And I didn't make any cute noises! Please stop tampering with my memory!"

"No, no, no, Kaede. Have you already forgotten what happened in the bath? If you say something like 'Yuya-kun, I like you', my rationality would become extinct in an instant."

"Aah!!!?? Yuya-kun, you idiot! I'm so embarrassed, please don't remind me!"

Kaede screamed and slapped me with a pillow. I wanted her to stop because it hurt like h\*\*l, but I thought it was cute that she felt embarrassed with her face going all red, so there exists zero downside to it.

“It’s wrong for you to say such strange things, Yuya-kun! Come on, it’s time to go to bed! Please get under the covers!”

Wasn’t it Kaede who said something before and reminded me of it? I thought about it, but quietly went under the covers with her without saying anything. Then, of course, Kaede leaned in close to me and placed her head on my chest.

Kaede stared up at me with her eyes. I understood what she was silently insisting. I hugged her tightly and gently as requested.

“Ehehe, this is how I should be when I sleep. I’m warm and fuzzy in Yuya-kun’s arms. I’m so happy.”

Kaede also wrapped her arms around my waist in order to increase the closeness as she said to my debauched face. The sweet scent of cinnamon that had sunk into her body from the bath earlier soothing me.

“Good night, Yuya-kun. I love you.”

“Good night, Kaede. I love you too.”

I think I will be sleeping well tonight.